THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FROM PROHIBITION TO GOVERNMENT CONTROL
THE LIQUOR QUESTION IN ALBERTA
1909 - 1929

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled FROM PROHIBITION TO GOVERNMENT CONTROL THE LIQUOR QUESTION IN ALBERTA. 1909-1929

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ABSTRACT

The 1920s in Canada witnessed the disintegration of the temperance and prohibition forces as well as decreasing interest in radical social reform. However, in Alberta the 1920s was also a decade of success for the United Farmers of Alberta, a farmers' organization traditionally allied with the social gospel, social reform groups, and strong agrarian protest. Prohibition came into being on July 1, 1916 with the help of the U.F.A., and yet two years after the U.F.A. had been elected as Alberta's government on July 18, 1921, prohibition was defeated by referendum on November 5, 1923. The U.F.A., once active supporters of prohibition, had declined to give tangible support to the prohibition forces, and thus faced the task of administering government control of the sale and distribution of alcohol. Between 1924 and 1925, the U.F.A. faced many of the same problems as had occurred under prohibition, including bootlegging, the operation of stills, and ineffective law enforcement, in addition to the problems of allocating the revenues and contending with pressure from prohibitionists and those who wanted conditions to be "wetter" than government control allowed.

It is thus necessary to examine the U.F.A.'s initial involvement and support for the prohibition cause and other social reforms and then investigate the situation the U.F.A. found itself in when it was called upon to enforce prohibition after 1921. The problems which the new and inexperienced government faced, as well as the changing public

attitudes to rigid legislation of moral issues such as prohibition, caused the U.F.A. government to abandon its traditional role. Its acceptance of the mood of the population and its realistic approach to the administration of government control, as well as its recognition that compromise and diplomacy was a necessary feature in the continuing success of any government, not only showed that the U.F.A. was grasping the fundamentals of politics and in so doing became a traditional political party, but also that the U.F.A. reflected a conservative and prosperous populace.

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CHAPTER I

THE ADVENT OF PROHIBITION 1909-1921

The Years of Apparent Success

Prohibition was a continuing feature of social reform in the United States and Canada from the 1840's into the early twentieth century. A general reform movement grew in the Canadian West during the first decade of the twentieth century, a movement which was centered around a demand for government action in such areas as the promotion of social welfare legislation, the cleansing of political life, enfranchisement of women, and the prohibition of the sale of alcohol.[1] The West was the center of much of this activity because of the presence of social problems resulting from a great influx of immigration and political and economic grievances on the part of the farmers.

The First World War was the final catalyst, for it ended an age of unchecked individualism, and ushered in a period of greater government involvement in social problems.[2] In addition the war gave a stronger sense of moral purpose to the whole idea of improving social conditions in Canada as success in a war against poverty and liquor would ensure success in the war against the Kaiser.[3]

The reform movement was based on the rise of the social conscience of the middle class and the development of a strong social purpose in the Protestant churches. Reformers were finding the doctrines

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[1]W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 28.

[2]John H. Thompson, "The Beginning of Our Regeneration: The Great War and Western Canadian Reform Movements," C.H.A./A.P., (1972), p. 229.

[3]Ibid.

of some of the traditional churches less satisfying[4] and turned to the ideas of the social gospel as advocated by farmers' organizations and other social reform movements. Henry Wise Wood, President of the United Farmers of Alberta, William Irvine, J.S. Woodsworth, and Salem Bland, all men with religious training entered the world of secular affairs and promoted the causes of social, political, and economic reform.

The reform movement also weakened the traditional partisanship and two party system in Canadian politics. Two particular reforms resulted from that tendency - prohibition and the enfranchisement of women - two very closely allied struggles. Prohibition, an issue of long standing, caused many difficulties for political parties, as it could split party ranks and was such an emotion charged issue that support for it or opposition to it could alienate important elements of the voting public.

The U.F.A., being an agrarian and social reform movement, and owing many of its beliefs to the tenets of the social gospel, naturally found themselves supporters of prohibition. They also had connections with other temperance and reform organizations. A combined Women's Christian Temperance Union for Alberta and Saskatchewan had been formed in 1905 and in 1907 temperance reformers in Alberta had met at Red Deer and formed the Alberta Temperance and Moral Reform League. The League aimed at promoting temperance sentiment by education; temperance legislation for the purposes of restricting

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[4]Richard Allen, The Social Passion - Religion and Reform in Canada 1914-28. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 16.

and then abolishing liquor traffic; and the destruction of vices such as gambling, prostitution, and corrupt politics.[5]

When the U.F.A. had been formed in 1909 with the amalgamation of the Alberta Farmers Association and the Society of Equity, they stated their objectives as "...to cooperate in promoting, fostering, and advancing the moral, material, financial, and business interests of the farmer in the Province of Alberta."[6] Included in the moral interests was the support of Direct Legislation, women's suffrage, and prohibition.

Between 1909 and 1915, the U.F.A., the W.C.T.U., and the Temperance and Moral Reform League worked together to have restricting legislation enacted. Although six deputations were sent to the provincial government, they met with little success, as the Liberal administration was cool towards the idea of prohibition, recognizing the political danger in the issue and being reluctant to lose important revenues.[7] The reform groups cooperated with each other, often sharing information. The U.F.A. Board of Directors announced to the 1914 Convention that the U.F.A. had helped to circulate the petition asking for a referendum on prohibition and had placed their documents and information at the disposal of the W.C.T.U. when they had met with

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[5]Ruth E. Spence, Prohibition in Canada. (Toronto: Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance, 1919), p. 449.

[6]Minutes of the U.F.A. Convention, 1909, Glenbow Alberta Institute Archives, Calgary. (Cited hereafter as Glenbow)

[7]L.G. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), p. 139.

Premier Sifton to discuss the issue.[8] There was also a good deal of interaction between the U.F.A. and other groups as the U.F.A. was asked to address the Temperance and Moral Reform League in 1915 and two representatives of the International and Provincial Temperance Organization addressed the Board of Directors meeting in 1914.[9]

As prohibition fervor increased in 1913 and 1914 the U.F.A. Conventions passed the following resolutions in support of prohibition:

> Whereas the present crisis in the struggle for prohibition of the liquor traffic in the province of Alberta is of interest and vital importance to the people of the rural districts;
>
> Be it resolved, first, that the convention place itself on record in supporting unreservedly the principle of prohibition of the liquor traffic, and second, that the convention recommend local unions to support such local option campaigns wherever initiated by the electors of the Province of Alberta. 10

In 1914 the Convention attached the problem of treating in bars:

> Whereas the practice of treating at public bars and other public places of intoxicating and alcoholic liquors is proving demoralizing and a public menace and a national calamity and that it causes moral and physical degeneracy, personal and public poverty, and indebtedness;
>
> Therefore be it resolved that restrictions by law be made whereby purchasing and distributing alcoholic and intoxicating drinks as beverage, except for the purchaser's personal consumption, by any person, licensed or otherwise, be made an offense, punishable

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[8] Minutes of the U.F.A. Convention, 1914, Glenbow, Calgary.

[9] Ibid., 1914, 1915.

[10] Ibid., 1913.

by a fine and that the restriction shall be known and operated as the Anti-Treating Act. [11]

After the success of the campaign for Direct Legislation in 1913, which allowed the people of the province to present a petition to the government requesting that legislation be formed in reply to the petition, a new and vigorous prohibition campaign was launched in Alberta. In 1914 the Temperance and Moral Reform League met at conventions in Edmonton and Calgary and pledged to vote only for prohibition candidates and to commence an aggressive campaign of education, agitation, petition and ballot for the prohibition of the manufacture, importation, sale and transport of alcoholic liquors.[12] At the Calgary Convention, W.J. Tregillus, President of the U.F.A., appealed for prohibition and pledged the U.F.A.'s total support for the new campaign.[13]

The reformers began active work on a petition for a government referendum on prohibition. On October 12, the government was presented with a petition signed by 23,656 people which was 7% over the number required by the Direct Legislation Act. In the Legislature on October 19, a Prohibitory Liquor Act was moved by Premier Sifton for submission to a 1915 referendum and the motion was passed without discussion.[14] The new act, based upon the Manitoba Measure of 1900, provided for the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors within the province for beverage purposes, thereby cutting off bars,

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[11] Minutes of the U.F.A. Convention, 1914, Glenbow, Calgary.

[12] Edmonton Bulletin, February 16, 1914.

[13] Calgary Herald, February 19, 1914.

[14] Edmonton Bulletin, October 20, 1914. Throughout the 1915, 1920

liquor shops, and licenses for clubs and railway dining cars. The Government was to control the use of alcohol in the areas of medicinal, mechanical, scientific, and sacramental use, and to appoint vendors under salary who would be permitted to sell liquor for those purposes but only on the affidavit of the purchaser or a prescription by a physician. While it was not illegal to have liquor in one's home, a limit was set at one quart of spirits and two gallons of malt liquor.[15] It is clear that the proposed act would have loopholes which would allow people to claim their purchases of liquor for purely medicinal purposes and that drugstore and physician prescriptions would be subject to abuse. As there was no restriction to the number of prescriptions a doctor could issue, nor was any record of prescriptions kept, those wanting liquor would be able to go to doctors and druggists for their supply.

Ignoring such considerations, the Temperance and Moral Reform League began to establish branches and general work in the province's fifty-two constituencies. Lay and clerical speakers, Rev. George Lloyd, and N.W. Rowell; local prohibitionists Nellie McClung and U.F.A. President James Speakman, spoke to public gatherings.[16] Although the Licensed Victuallers, the main opposition to the proposed act, imported A.C. Windle from Chicago to speak on their behalf, in addition to carrying out massive advertising campaigns in the provinces' newspapers, their support base was weak in the face of the call to defend

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and 1923 campaigns, the terms referendum and plebiscite were used interchangeably, referring to a seeking of public opinion which would then be acted upon in accordance with the Direct Legislation Act.

[15] Edmonton Bulletin, October 20, 1914.

[16] Thomas, p. 160.

the province in the war against the evils of liquor.

On July 21, 1915, the citizens of Alberta voted in prohibition with a vote of 58,295 for and 37,509 against. With such a clear mandate the Liberals passed the Prohibition Act in the spring of 1916, abolishing all licenses, hotel outlets, clubs and wholesalers. The success of prohibition was due to the cooperation between the religious and social reformers, but it is possible to say that without the support of the United Farmers of Alberta, much of the momentum behind the reformers would have been lost. It now remained for the Liberals to administer the new act and to set up a framework for enforcing it.

The Temperance and Moral Reform League was partly responsible for the creation of the Alberta Provincial Police force, because after prohibition became law in 1916, the League repeatedly suggested that the government appoint a commission, independent of party control to enforce the new law.[17] Then in 1917, the Liberals created the A.P.P., originally under a commission of three, which after an unsuccessful two year trial period was disbanded and the A.P.P. was placed under the control of the Attorney-General's Department. It was also at that time that the R.N.W.M.P. were withdrawn from general service.[18] The special responsibility of enforcing the Liquor Act was placed under a separate force of plain clothes men under an inspector appointed by the head of the force. The A.P.P.'s problems were compounded by

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[17] Spence, p. 456.

[18] Ibid.

the difficulty of obtaining men for the force, especially during the war years, and the fact that the policy of securing evidence and apprehending offenders was not always clearly defined or understood by the police, nor the general populace.[19]

The most difficult areas the A.P.P. had to deal with, were in regards to interprovincial liquor traffic, and cross the border traffic, bootlegging, and the operation of stills. Furthermore the A.P.P. men often had the greatest disadvantages because of a lack of modern equipment and effective organization. The experiences of Constable Smith, stationed in Southern Alberta provide an excellent example of the difficulties involved in trying to enforce the prohibition act.

Smith, who was the only A.P.P. officer in the Canadian-United States border region between British Columbia and Saskatchewan, was in charge of stopping the flow of liquor from four hotels in Sweet Grass, Montana into Alberta. Previous provincial policemen stationed in the area had never made any seizures, and it had been rumored that they had been "paid off."[20] Police vehicles had been shot at, telephone wires had been cut, and large tacks had often been thrown on the roads to puncture the tires of the policemen's cars. When Smith arrived at his detachment he discovered that the house needed repairs and that he would have to purchase his own car. When he was finally able to start out on the trail of the liquor runners, he was first offered a bribe of $2,000 to "shut his eyes for a month or so" and

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[19] Minutes of the W.C.T.U. Convention, 1919, Glenbow, Calgary.

[20] Archibald Edwin Smith Papers, Glenbow, Calgary.

the hotel owners from Sweet Grass paid spotters to watch him.[21] It had been the custom of the A.P.P., when they caught liquor runners, to charge the men with "having liquor in other than a private dwelling" and only a small fine of $200 or less would have to be paid. Smith was able to catch two men, Lee White and Bill Harris, charging them with a violation of the War Measures Act; "Carrying liquor through a prohibited area during war time," for which a fine of between $200 and $1,000 could be levied. The lawyer for the defendents, a Mr. Ostlund from Lethbridge, told Smith to withdraw the charges or he might lose his job with the A.P.P. Smith ignored the threat and the men received fines of $500 and $300. In addition the car seized yielded $650 worth of liquor. Although the A.P.P. worked on a system in which the informant would get a reward of 25% of the fine and 25% of the value of the car when sold, in actual fact Smith found that he only received his reward money in his first case involving White and Harris, but not from his subsequent nine successful cases.[22] It is easy to see why many A.P.P. members found it more lucrative to accept bribes than to try to enforce the law.

Consequently the A.P.P. were often under attack with regard to their effectiveness as a law enforcement agency and their connivance with the bootleggers and the still operators. The Calgary Herald suggested that members of the Coaldale A.P.P. "wink, drink, and don't enforce the act."[23] Inspector Risk defended the force, stating that

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[21] Archibald Edwin Smith Papers, Glenbow, Calgary.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Calgary Herald, February 27, 1920.

enforcement of the Liquor Act was not always easy, in that it was not a popular act, and that there was little cooperation from the citizens of the province.[24]

By 1919 moonshining was being carried out on a large scale, especially as there was no Federal Act preventing the manufacture of liquor by private still. Boyle had corresponded with Dominion authorities on the topic and had discovered that there was one old act which provided that licenses had to be secured, so the police had proceeded on that basis and had secured convictions.[25] Although the A.P.P. had been responsible for uncovering 143 of the 167 stills discovered in Alberta in 1919, there was still no special organization for detecting bootleggers. The operation of stills was a federal matter under the Department of Inland Revenue, and the R.N.W.M.P. were to assume the full responsibility for eradicating the illicit manufacture of liquor.[26]

Superintendent Bryan of the A.P.P. complained of the difficulty of securing prompt assistance from the Inland Revenue authorities and the fact that only a fraction of the $38,980 in fines from cases successfully convicted by the A.P.P. came to the province.[27] Obviously the provincial authorities were expected to find the stills and charge

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[24] Calgary Herald, February 27, 1920.

[25] Ibid., March 4, 1920.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

the operators, but the federal government would benefit from money collected as fines. Boyle felt that only about 10% of the stills in operation were detected, especially as they were often "kitchen stills" using the simplest devices to make the liquor from substances like raisins on top of the kitchen stove.[28] It was also next to impossible to prevent liquor importers from selling locally, for although the police watched the premises of the importers, liquor which had been brought in by the barrel was often reshipped in any sort of case, keg or bottle and detection of fraud was extremely difficult to do.

The problem of the importation of liquor from out-of-the-province sources had been rectified in 1917 when a federal order-in-council had forbidden the transporting of liquor into any province that had enacted prohibition legislation. In February 1918 nation-wide prohibition was declared for the duration of the war plus one year. In early 1919 the House of Commons passed a bill to attach orders-in-council to the National Prohibition Act which gave federal support to provincial legislation, however the Senate defeated the bill. A compromise was finally reached which allowed for a law banning the shipment of alcoholic beverages into any province where prohibition was in force, but only if a plebiscite was held first to confirm the desire of the electorate to have prohibition continued. The ban on interprovincial liquor trade continued until the end of 1919, however the federal government postponed the provincial plebiscites until October of 1920. This postponement allowed the interprovincial sale and traffic in liquor to resume. The delay was not explained but one

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[28] Calgary Herald, March 4, 1920.

could assume the pressure from the Canadian breweries may have had some effect on the government's decision.[29]

In March of 1920, Alberta Attorney-General Boyle, in proposing the motion calling for a plebiscite on the matter of importation, thought that the provinces should have full autonomy in issues of liquor restrictions and he felt that amendments to the B.N.A. act would probably have to come about for that purpose eventually to end the confusion between the Dominion and the provinces.[30]

The announcement of the plebiscite was seen as a chance for the province to have "...practically bone-dry legislation if it was so desired." The Liberals pledged to give the question to the Legislature to decide how far prohibition should be enforced if the plebiscite carried, and if it did not, the Legislature would decide how best to restrict and regulate liquor importing and exporting houses. Since the interprovincial trade issue was part of the original prohibition measure initiated by the people, it was up to the people to show if they still had that opinion.[31]

The brewery interests, concerned and fearful about the effects of the Prohibition law, began a concerted effort to pressure for some modification of the prohibition act. Even before prohibition became law, the brewers and hotel owners hoped to work out a compromise along the lines of the Saskatchewan dispensary system in which they would not insist on maintaining the bar, if an alternative

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[29] A.E. Cross to Norman Dawes, September 4, 1948, C.B.M. papers, Glenbow, Calgary.

[30] Calgary Herald, March 4, 1920. [31] Ibid.

cafe system, similar to the European model which allowed patrons to sit at tables and obtain light lunches, was allowed.[32]

By 1918 the liquor interests were feeling the restraint of prohibition. A.E. Cross, the President of the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company, complained to various friends and business associates, that prohibition was ruining the business and that he was having difficulties meeting his expenses and the interest on his bonds.[33] To combat the bad effects of prohibition, the breweries sought advice on how to change the attitudes of the people. Norman Dawes, the Managing Director of the National Breweries in Montana, advised the brewers to give newspaper interviews for "It is the constant hammering that will count in the long run and no stone will be left unturned to educate the public."[34]

The U.F.A. as well was not exempt from pressure, although it had no provincial political aspirations at the time. In a personal letter dated December 7, 1918, A.E. Cross lamented the fact that President Wood of the U.F.A. was such a pronounced prohibitionist and had so much influence with the farmer that any attempt to influence them at their 1919 Convention to modify their prohibition resolutions or admit 2½% alcohol would be extremely difficult.[35] It appears the

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[32] A.E. Cross to J. Dallas, May 4, 1918, Calgary Brewing and Malting Company Papers, (cited hereafter as G.B.M. Papers). Glenbow, Calgary.

[33] A.E. Cross to Hon. F.A. MacNaughton, December 4, 1918, G.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

[34] Norman Dawes to A.E. Cross, January 6, 1919, C.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

[35] A.E. Cross to F.W. Drewry, December 2, 1918, C.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

brewers felt that the rank and file of the U.F.A. could perhaps be convinced to accept some change in the prohibition law and in that respect there was hope for a weakening attitude on the part of many Albertans.

Since the brewers were hopeful that the mood of Albertans was changing and that particularly in the urban centers people would like to see the sale of beer, Cross suggested two possible petitions: one asking the government to allow the sale of beer, and the other asking the government to change the prohibition laws to extend the maximum allowed percentage of alcohol to 2½%. The petitions were to be timed for January 1919, when many of the soldiers would have returned home and the Provincial legislature would be in session.[36] However, at that time the liquor interests were still disorganized and the idea of the petitions was abandoned.

When the federal order-in-council lapsed at the end of 1919, the breweries' business improved as they were able to fill the orders of the export houses.[37] On January 7, Attorney-General Boyle announced that he was considering the introduction of legislation which would prevent the warehousing of liquor within the province's borders, since warehouses could be used for bootlegging.[38] Legislation was introduced but through the Nat Bell and Silver Spring Brewing Company cases, the legislation was declared ultra vires, and even

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[36] A.E. Cross to L.H. Clarke, December 3, 1918, C.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

[37] Edmonton Bulletin, January 6, 1920.

[38] Ibid., January 7, 1920.

the right of appeal was denied the government.[39]

When amendments to the Canada Temperance Act allowed for a provincial prohibition referendum, the W.C.T.U. and the Social Service Council launched their most effective campaign against the return of liquor. The memory of the war was still close enough for the W.C.T.U. to compare the cry of the 1918 drive against the Germans, "If the line breaks nothing else matters", with the state of affairs in 1920:

> ...so at this crisis any gain for the drink traffic, this great arch-enemy of our home and national life would be a national calamity, for while its ultimate overthrow is certain, yet a temporary gain would mean the sacrifice of men, of homes, of children. But the line will not break. [40]

Louise McKinney, President of the W.C.T.U., put forth a special plea to the women, as a part of the electorate to heed the "call to arms" and fight a foe who was much closer to home than the Germans had been, and against whom it took more real courage to oppose.[41] The U.F.W.A. was also very involved in the campaign as some locals had even taken entire charge of the campaign in their district.[42] The October 25 vote resulted in a 62,772 to 44,176 decision for prohibition. The referendum was hailed as a great victory and H.H. Hull of the Social Service Council expressed the general view that:

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[39] Edmonton Bulletin, April 14, 1921.

[40] President's Address, Minutes of the W.C.T.U. Convention, 1919, Glenbow, Calgary.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Annual Report of the U.F.W.A. 1920 Winnifred Ross Papers, Alberta Provincial Archives.

> Now we have done away with the bar, and shortly will have done away with the inter-provincial trading. Let us not relax our energy one bit, but be determined to fight the harder...43

The same enforcement problems existed however and the 1920 hiatus period had even made them more difficult, as the liquor interests had been given the opportunity to regain some of their strength.[44]

> ...the damage was done, reaction set in, too great a start was secured by the liquor manufacturers who were able to set up their markets once again. 45

Throughout the five years in which the Liberals were responsible for enforcing prohibition, they were often charged with corrupt practises, as in 1916, when Dr. Stanley had charged that licensees in Alberta were coerced by agents of the government into offering large sums of money to those agents which were used for the Liberal government.[46] In 1912 Louise McKinney accused Boyle of being unsympathetic to the spirit of the prohibition law and charged that provincial judges were often drunk all night and then sat in judgement on liquor cases the next morning.[47] Although Boyle was mildly supportive of prohibition he fully realized the difficulties of trying to enforce that law. As he pointed out in 1921, the liquor law was like any other prohibitory law, such as those for robbery or murder,

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[43] Annual Report of the U.F.W.A. 1920, Winnifred Ross Papers, Alberta Provincial Archives.

[44] James Gray, The Roar of the Twenties, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 136.

[45] Julia E. Johnsen, The Problem of Liquor Control, (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1934), p. 241.

[46] Edmonton Bulletin, March 2, 1916. [47] Ibid., March 25, 1921.

in that they did not necessarily prevent the crime from taking place. Furthermore, under the liquor act, there was not the personal injury to others resulting from an infraction as there would be in the case of assault or robbery. In those cases the person wronged could go to the police and with the help of witnesses effect a conviction. In the case of a person buying liquor from a bootlegger, the purchaser did not think that the bootlegger was a criminal, or that any personal injury had taken place, rather the act had been more like a favor, so naturally no one would inform the police. An espionage system might be the answer to the problem but the people would be most unwilling to accept such an invasion of their individual freedom.[48] Thus one can see that the difficulties in reconciling the attitudes of people towards prohibition with the desires on the part of fervent prohibitionists for stronger enforcement were not easy problems to solve. Just as the Liberals had problems in dealing with both sides, the U.F.A. would face the same problems during their years as the administrators of the liquor laws.

The Alberta Moderation League was modelled on the example of the British Columbia Moderation League, organized in early 1919 under the leadership of Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper and Fred Buscombe who led the Moderationaists to victory in the British Columbia 1920 referendum on government control. The Alberta brewers, the Army and Navy Veteran's Association, the Great War Veterans' Association and

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[48] Edmonton Bulletin, April 14, 1921.

others interested in the return of open liquor sales united in the latter part of 1920. The League had its head office in Lethbridge, suggesting the close connection with the Southern Alberta brewing company. Few leaders of the League in Alberta emerged by name, but R.A. Darker was the president, R.C. Betts represented the brewers and Bob Edwards, a supporter of Conservatives, expounded Moderation League aims in the Calgary Eye-Opener. The League's propaganda appealed to the idea of temperance inherent in the term moderation, the poisonous quality of bootleg liquor, the difficulty of enforcing prohibition, and the increased use of liquor at public functions and in the home.[49]

The liquor interests, now united in the Moderation League, realized after the October 1920 prohibition victory, that much greater organization and cooperation would be needed to bring about a victory for the "wets". On that basis the pressure tactics of the Moderation League had reached such a point in early 1921, that it seemed likely that the Liberals would submit a plebiscite to the province to determine whether or not bone dry legislation was desired or if a liquor dispensing system should be established throughout the province.[50] On January 6, 1912, the Moderation League sent a delegation to Premier Stewart and his cabinet asking for a plebiscite. The deputation, headed by W.M. Short, Charles Bremner, and W.W. Howe claimed that only about 25-35% of the electorate were represented in the 1920 vote; that the liquor laws were not enforced despite the efforts of the police;

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[49] Calgary Eye-Opener, July 1, 1922.

[50] Edmonton Bulletin, January 1, 1921.

that the illicit manufacture and sale of spirits practically excluded lighter liquors; and that the bootleggers were being accorded sympathy by the public, a sure sign of the disintegration of the morals of the community.[51] The Moderation League was certain that government control would mean the restoration of authority and respect for the law.

Stewart replied to the delegation that the cabinet was in the process of formulating new amendments and that:

> As a government we have never initiated a policy of liquor control in the province...simply accepting such legislation as a majority of the people evidently desired through their expression at the polls and we are doing our level best to enforce the law as it was framed by the legislature. [51]

He also noted that this occasion was the first time that an organized protest against prohibition had been made to the government.[53]

In response to Stewart's statement, the Moderation League organized a petition asking that the prohibition law be repealed and a system similar to that in British Columbia, which had instituted government control in 1920, be established in Alberta.[54] By January 27, they had collected 1,000 names and hoped to get at least 10,000 signatures each from Edmonton and Calgary. By March the petition was reported to have collected 67,000 names but there was some reservation about the validity of the petition. An editorial in the Edmonton Bulletin questioned the Moderation League's tactics of pressuring for new legislation without allowing

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[51] Edmonton Bulletin, January 7, 1921.

[52] Ibid. [53] Ibid. [54] Ibid., January 25, 1921.

the public to be consulted through a plebiscite.[55] Lack of supervision of the signing of the petition, and the League's refusal to guarantee the authenticity of the names on the petition, revealed a petition of little value which could not be a reliable indicator of public sentiment.[56] The Bulletin felt that the request for the sale of beer was just a ruse to allow people to buy liquor as a medicine when they really wanted it as a beverage.[57] The public was not willing to reopen the bars and the Moderation League should not expect the government to take the responsibility for changing a law without the mandate of the people.[58] Perhaps the time was not quite right for any radical change in the liquor laws, but even if only half of the signatures on the petition were bona fide, that represented a significant number of people who did want to see a loosening of prohibition. For the time being the continuing issue of "wet" petitions was put aside, to be raised again when the U.F.A. assumed office. Two issues distracted the public from further Moderation League tactics; the introduction of the new amendments to the prohibition act and the calling of the provincial election for July 18, 1921.

Attorney-General Boyle introduced the long-awaited amendments on April 11, prefacing the bill with a lengthy defence of the Liberals' administration of the Liquor Act. He stated that Alberta could boast

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[55] Edmonton Bulletin, March 12, 1921.

[56] Ibid. [57] Ibid. [58] Ibid.

of being second only to Ontario in the number of convictions for 1920 (3,480), and Ontario had five times the population.[59] Such statistics could also suggest that Alberta had a much greater liquor problem and less observance of the law. Alberta's profits amounted to $811,389.27 from the government vendors, $696,074.80 from the druggists, and $10,623.36 from the 504 doctors issuing 531,168 prescriptions at $2.00 a prescription. Even prohibition could provide revenues for the provincial coffers. Boyle, in defence of the A.P.P. also accused the municipal police of aiding liquor act offenders by warning the bootleggers about intended raids.[60]

The new amendments, designed to tighten up the prohibition law, provided for heavier penalties and a greater restriction of the drug stores. While most druggists obeyed the law, the government had discovered that some, after paying a few fines, conceived of the idea of having their liquor business handled by a clerk who was often an old bartender. The druggists would then escape punishment by blaming the clerk. The M.L.A. from Lacombe, A. Gilmore, suggested that the government take over the dispensing of the prescriptions from the druggists but as Boyle explained, he had no desire to see his government substituted for the drugstores as the "goat" in the liquor issue receiving all the criticism.[61] Instead the Liberals restricted the druggists to a quota of 100 prescriptions a month. The

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[59] Edmonton Bulletin, April 14, 1921.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Edmonton Journal, June 16, 1921.

amendments, while not major in their scope, did please the prohibition forces intent upon securing stricter legislation. Boyle also announced that there would be no referendum on the Liquor Act, but that the experiment in B.C. would be watched and compared with the strengthened Alberta law. Neither the Liberals, the Prohibitionists, nor the Moderation League had an opportunity to observe the workings of the new Liberal amendments as the province soon became embroiled in an election campaign which would sweep the agrarian and reform based U.F.A. into power.

The U.F.A. had declared its intentions of participating in provincial politics in January of 1921.[62] At that time the U.F.W.A. passed a resolution which was later approved at the general U.F.A. convention urging a more rigid enforcement of the law on the basis of the results of the 1920 referendum. The delegates pledged themselves to support the provincial authorities "by every means in their power" and asked that all prescriptions issued by doctors be entered into a book which would be open to the public at all times.[63]

As the U.F.A. formulated its position platform, it placed emphasis on improving the life of Albertans; suggesting the training of nurses aids for rural districts and the establishment of Home and Training Schools for petty thieves to train them in some useful trade. The election platform, based on the Progressives' beliefs

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62 Edmonton Bulletin, January 20, 1921.

63 Minutes of the U.F.A. Convention, 1921, Glenbow, Calgary.

in proportional representation, the preferential ballot, the initiative, referendum and the recall, also stated the U.F.A.'s position on prohibition:

> To enact and enforce such legislation for the control of the Liquor traffic as the people have sanctioned by referendum. Prohibition is an integral part of the Farmers' Platform and the U.F.A. will use its influence in that direction. 64

One of the most unusual facets of the election was that the U.F.A. was forced to campaign for the continued support of prohibition without the help of the province's temperance forces. That decision had been announced at the June 22 meeting of the Social Service Council executive meeting, where it was decided that they would not participate in the election, nor run as temperance candidates. However, individual members could participate and were urged to pressure party candidates to declare their sympathies with temperance.[65] Either the recent referendum campaign had exhausted the Prohibitionists or they felt confident in relying solely on the efforts of the U.F.A. The Council gave no reason for its decision so it can only be conjecture as to why they decided on that course.

While the U.F.A. was reaffirming its support of prohibition and campaigning for group government, the Conservative opposition, under the leadership of A.F. Ewing viciously attacked the Liberal party's administration. Their "disastrous" financial policy was particularly emphasized as Ewing pointed to the growth of the provincial

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[64] U.F.A. Provincial Platform, 1921, Winnifred Ross Papers, Alberta Provincial Archives.

[65] Edmonton Bulletin, June 12, 1921.

debt and the loss of money which had been incurred through the Edmonton, Dunvegan, and British Columbia Railway.[66]

The Conservatives also accused the Liberals of "mutilating" the liquor act so as "to permit a regime of bootlegging with 90 per cent of the people breaking the law."[67] Captain Wells, speaking at a Conservative rally condemned the Liberals for replacing the bars with drugstores, allowing bootlegging to become rampant, and for employing dishonest citizens to enforce the liquor law.[68]

The Liberals attempted to defend their administration of prohibition pointing to the high number of convictions and the difficulty of gaining the cooperation of all citizens. Nellie McClung and Boyle toured Liberal rallies together in the attempt to justify their course of action. Although Nellie McClung had often battled with Boyle in the Legislature,[69] the two made a good show of solidarity on behalf of the party.

While the Conservatives launched a vigorous attack on the Liberals, and the Liberals emphasized their long administration, the U.F.A. ran a clean, well-organized campaign. Their candidates did not waste time attacking the Liberal administration, rather they stressed their own plan to make prohibition work as well as they could.

Thus when the U.F.A. won the election, taking 38 of the possible 60 seats, a new and inexperienced party based on ideas of group

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[66] Edmonton Bulletin, June 26, 1921.

[67] Calgary Herald, July 13, 1921.

[68] Edmonton Journal, July 15, 1921.

[69] Ibid., July 6, 1921.

democracy and familiar only with acting as a pressure group was faced with the responsibility of enforcing one of the most difficult laws. Although it is difficult to assess the importance of prohibition in the results of the 1921 election, it is possible to conclude that it was one of the many issues which made the voting public discontented with the existing state of affairs. If the urban population was not enthusiastic about the possibility of a government of "farmers,"[70] the rural population supported a fundamentalist, reform based movement which had steadfastly supported the cause of prohibition. While the Liberals had responded to pressure from the U.F.A. and other temperance groups, they had their opportunity to prove their abilities. The Conservative party could not capture the confidence of the voters, especially as much of the farmers' discontent at that time was caused by federal Conservative policy, particularly the termination of the Wheat Board Act in 1920. Moreover, they had no definite plan, no history of loyalty to the cause, only criticism and traditional party policies. Economic depression, discontent with traditional political parties and frustration with policies adverse to the farmers may have been the major factors in the U.F.A.'s success in 1921, but the opportunity to have a long-time proponent of prohibition be responsible for its administration was seen by many as the way to really make prohibition effective.

As the new U.F.A. government began to take over the reins of office, the prohibition forces felt reassured that prohibition

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[70] Calgary Herald, July 11, 1921.

would truly have a chance to succeed. The W.C.T.U. expressed the opinion that they were reasonably certain that the new government would not submit the question of government control via a referendum to the people and:

> ...that it is hardly probable that the moderationists will attempt by legally certified petitions to force the issue, so on that score we are safe for the present and while the people generally do not realize what a great calamity has been averted, yet we, who do understand offer fervent praise to God for the way in which he has led us. 71

The Prohibitionists were deluded into thinking that the major battle was over, but little did they suspect that the government they trusted to not fail them, would be the instrument of their destruction, and that the liquor interests, instead of being mortally wounded, were waiting on the sidelines to launch an attack so well-organized and clever, that the temperance forces would be completely destroyed.

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[71] Minutes of the W.C.T.U. Convention, 1921, Glenbow, Calgary.

CHAPTER II

THE U.F.A. AND PROHIBITION 1921-1923

The U.F.A. Under Pressure

Once the U.F.A. had gained power, they found themselves subject to pressure being applied by other interest groups. Prohibition supporters pressed for even stricter controls and the Moderation League and hotelmen began a well organized and high-pressure attack on the new government. The U.F.A., caught between trying to fulfill the promises of their election platform and the realities of government, chose an essentially conservative approach, one lacking any real initiative or risks. Perhaps total U.F.A. support for continued prohibition might not have insured a victory, however the suddenness of the U.F.A.'s defection for the prohibition cause and their acceptance of a political role is difficult to explain, especially in the light of their staunch support of social reform. Although the U.F.A. was beset by severe economic difficulties, they had an honest desire to aid the province's farmers who formed the base of their support. It seems likely that once the U.F.A. government recognized the moral, social, legal, and political difficulties of administering prohibition, their idealistic hopes for promoting greater public acceptance of prohibition were reduced by practical political and economic considerations. Percival Baker, U.F.A. candidate from Ponoka had once idealistically stated that: "The conscience of the people must be educated so that they will have the same conscience in regards to the breaking of the liquor laws, that they have in respect to stealing."[1] The U.F.A. were soon to find out that such a change would be impossible to effect, and accordingly their desire to support prohibition would be diminished.

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[1] Edmonton Bulletin, February 12, 1921.

The U.F.A. was barely allowed to elect Herbert Greenfield as leader and Premier and select a cabinet which included lawyer, J.E. Brownlee as Attorney-General and Irene Parlby as Minister without Portfolio on July 27, 1921 when the people of the province began to make their diverse opinions known to the new government. Prohibition supporters, especially the Social Service Council and the churches were of the opinion that the U.F.A. would be able to rectify all the problems and make the province "bone dry".[2]

Private citizens were also quick to inform the Premier of bootlegging and still operations in their area. They often expressed their willingness to provide the government with whatever information might be needed on these illegal activities.[3] Thus prohibition was allowing so-called "concerned" citizens to act as informants on other members of their community. Such conditions created distrust and widened the gap between prohibitionists and those in favor of more moderate methods of control. Yet police officials like Chief Ritchie of Calgary often complained that there was "plenty of hearsay evidence but people were never willing to come forward and testify."[4]

Although the letters to the Premier were often full of gossip and information about town drunks, blind-pig operations[5] or open sales

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[2] Social Service Council of Alberta to Greenfield, August 15, 1921, P. Papers, Provincial Archives of Alberta (P.A.A.). While it is likely that the Liberals had received similar letters, no records exist of that administration.

[3] W.A. Smith to Greenfield, May 2, 1922, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[4] Calgary Herald, July 4, 1921.

[5] P. Robinson to Greenfield, August 6, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

of beer in hotels with A.P.P. officers looking on or joining in,[6] Greenfield's standard reply was always "You may rest assured that the new government will do everything in their power to enforce the Liquor Act."[7] One can almost sense Greenfield's distaste for the whole matter.

While H.H. Hull, the General Secretary of the Social Service Council sought interviews with the Premier[8] with regard to passing stronger measures and expressed the impatience of the temperance people,[9] the liquor interests also began their attack upon the government. Private citizens called for liquor stores selling good, cheap liquor which would eliminate private stills and bootleggers:

> Give the working man what he wants of good quality, at a small profit, and in quantities...a stiff penalty for the abuse of it and I feel certain you will go a long way in the direction of settling the present unrest of our people.[10]

More organized pressure came from the Brewers of Alberta. Represented by D.C. Betts of the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company, they met with Greenfield and Brownlee on November 21, 1921 and set down in a confidential letter to the Premier their aims and arguments. Generally they attempted to show how indispensable they were to the well-being of the province. They argued that capital investment in

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[6] T.L. Smith to Greenfield, August 15, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[7] Greenfield to P. Robinson, August 15, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[8] H.H. Hull to Greenfield, September 16, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[9] Ibid.

[10] M.J. Spencer to Greenfield, September 25, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

the five provincial breweries[11] amounted to about $4,000,000: the yearly payroll was estimated at $440,000; yearly payment of taxes (land, business, excise and sales) amounted to $335,000; and the total amount of freight paid to railway companies on shipments originating from the brewing and malting business amounted to $515,000.[12] In addition they stated that the Canadian Malting Company plant in Calgary, and the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company bought from 600,000 to 1,000,000 bushels of barley each year in Alberta. If further restrictions were put on the breweries, they could be put out of business which would mean that the Canadian Malting Company would have to close their Calgary plant and that the sale of "close to one million bushels of barley each year would be lost to the farmers of this Province."[13] The implication was, could a farmers' party afford to lose their farmer support?

The delegation had also pointed out that the brewing companies were "all-Canadian" industries in that they made use of lumber from British Columbia to make the barrels, bottles from Alberta, wrappers made in Winnipeg and Montreal and that their business provided employment for Canadian citizens. They also employed many Moderation League arguments, suggesting a possible connection between the two

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[11] The 5 companies were the Medicine Hat Brewing Co. Ltd., Lethbridge Breweries Ltd., Silver Spray Brewery Co. Ltd., Edmonton Brewing Co. Ltd., and the Calgary Brewing and Malting Co. Ltd.

[12] D.C. Betts to Brownlee, November 25, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[13] Ibid.

groups. They pointed to the difficulties of enforcing the Liquor Act, the "great" quantities of whiskey and other liquors still being consumed which had been procured from illegal sources; the loss of revenue to the provincial and federal governments, and the fact that people who only wanted light beer and wine were being forced into drinking stronger liquor.[14] The breweries protested that their 2½% proof beer could not compete with the easily available stronger liquor, nor the increasingly popular home manufactured liquor which they declared to be of a higher alcohol content, made of inferior ingredients such as molasses, yeastcake, extracts and fruit instead of good Canadian grain which of course produced a "skillfully made and duty-paid beverage."[15] To remedy this situation they proposed that a 3½% proof beer be allowed whose production would be "sound, economic, wholesome, nutritious, stimulating, but not intoxicating."[16]

The Premier acknowledged their views but still expressed no definite opinion as to what the government could do.[17] Accordingly as the Alberta Legislature prepared to sit in the 1922 spring session the anti-prohibition forces set about finding out exactly where the new government stood on prohibition. Bob Edwards, editor of the Calgary Eye-opener, long a supporter of allowing the sale of light beer and wine[18] who had been elected to the legislature in the 1921 election was one of those engaged in that task. It appeared to

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[14] D.C. Betts to Brownlee, November 25, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[15] Ibid. [16] Ibid.

[17] Greenfield to Betts, December 7, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[18] Calgary Eye-Opener, July 17, 1915.

Edwards and to others that the U.F.A. was somewhat reluctant to tackle the whole prohibition issue. As early as November of 1921, C.W. McMillan, manager of the Macdonald Hotel in Edmonton, had obtained a confidential interview with Brownlee and had arrived at the conclusion that, "the prospects of getting beer are good," once the government had made its obligatory offer to enforce the law.[19] Prohibition was part of the U.F.A.'s platform, so apparently the new government, as Edwards phrased it, was going to make a "stab" at enforcing the Act by announcing a policy of strict enforcement of the law.[20] The Act would provide for a commissioner who would be allowed to be the "goat", and once the public could see that the continuance of prohibition was a total failure, the government would introduce a bill legalizing the unrestricted sale of beer plus a very limited allowance of spirits.[21] Although Brownlee always declared himself to be a staunch supporter of prohibition,[22] there seemed to be a feeling among the liquor interests that he favored modification of the Prohibition Act to allow for beer sales. However, they felt that in order to retain the prohibitionists in the U.F.A. camp, "planks in a pre-election platform...could not... be chopped out too suddenly."[23] It is difficult to know how they

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[19] C.W. McMillan to A.E. Cross, November 9, 1921, C.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

[20] R.C. Edwards to D.C. Betts, February 22, 1922, C.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Edmonton Bulletin, April 18, 1923.

[23] R.C. Edwards to D.C. Betts, February 22, 1922, C.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

arrived at that opinion, because Brownlee was always careful to never express his opinion on the workings of prohibition or later on government control[24] either in public or in writing. It can only be presumed that either they misinterpreted Brownlee, or in confidential meetings he did give them reason to hope for a change.

The breweries began issuing pamphlets to members of the legislature and running ads in the newspapers. But however optimistic Edwards might have been about the attitudes of the U.F.A. cabinet, the brewing company officials were not convinced.[25] After a meeting in early February 1922, between two of their executives, Mr. Sinclair and Mr. McGillivray, and Greenfield and Brownlee, the brewers discovered that the Attorney-General was of the opinion that Alberta's brewers were the worst bootleggers in the province. Brownlee accused them of selling beer over the allowable 2½% alcohol content, and inducing small dealers and buffet keepers to break the law and sell alcohol. Brownlee wished to introduce more stringent amendments to the Liquor Act so that any employee, officer or director of any brewery could be held responsible for the acts of that company, even being liable for a jail sentence.[26] Brownlee and Greenfield also refused to accede to the company officials' request for a plebiscite but did agree that if a properly signed petition was

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[24] Brownlee to J.L. Elder, November 23, 1926, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[25] Betts to A.E. Cross, February 16, 1922, C.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

[26] Ibid.

presented, the government would have no choice but to grant a plebiscite under the provision of the Direct Legislation Act.

It is apparent that the breweries were in fact supplying stronger beer, because McGillivray and Sinclair advised Betts that it would be wise not to antagonize the government more than necessary before the planned changes were made in the Liquor Act. They therefore agreed that they should discontinue sending out anything but temperance beer for the next two weeks, until the question was settled in the House.[27] The "wets" obviously hoped that they had influenced the government to allow some easing of liquor act restrictions, however they were to be disappointed.

In early March of 1922, Attorney-General Brownlee introduced the amendments to the Liquor Act, designed to provide stricter enforcement of the Act and tie up the loose ends of administration. Prohibition was still the intent of the Act so it was clear that the U.F.A. had bowed to pressure from the prohibition forces. The most important change was the removal from drugstores of the right to sell liquor, by substituting a system of government dispensaries.[28] Clearly such a move would make it easier for Albertans to accept a general government control of the sale of all liquor later. While penalties for unlawful possession of liquor other than in a common dwelling were increased in minimum from $20 to $50 and up to a maximum

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[27] Betts to A.E. Cross, February 16, 1922. C.B.M. Papers, Glenbow.

[28] The Albertan, February 28, 1922.

of $200, magistrates were also given the option of imposing only the fine, a fine and imprisonment or imprisonment. Second offenses could merit a fine of $200 to $500 or a three to six month prison term.

In addition a Liquor Act Commission was to be appointed, whose duties would include the handling of records submitted by the drugstores, the monthly issuance of numbered prescription forms to physicians who had applied for them and the keeping of any records called for by the legislature.[29] The commissioner was also responsible for the general supervision of the drugstores, restaurants and billiard rooms as well as conducting special investigations when necessary. The government, by order-in-council was given the right to regulate and limit the amount of liquor which could be sold for medicinal, sacramental or scientific purposes, and to determine the number of prescriptions which could be issued to a physician.[30] Restaurants, buffets and other dining establishments were liable to a fine of from $200 to $1,000 for first offences for unlawful sale of alcohol and in the future they would have to obtain a license to be a restaurant. Liquor export houses were to be regulated under a new Act which would provide for a tax based on the stock carried with a maximum of $2,000 annually and a surtax of $2.00 per gallon of liquor in excess of 1,000 gallons. In effect the government was increasing its control and regulation of the liquor business.

The Social Service Council, pleased with the new amendments,

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[29] "Fifty Years" Alberta Liquor Control Board, 1974.

[30] Ibid.

saw the U.F.A. government as having "definitely recorded its positive intention to do all in its power to enforce the Liquor Act,"[31] and they called upon the Council's forces in the province to give every assistance to the government.[32] Reverend Edward S. Bishop, a minister in the Presbyterian Church was chosen as the first commissioner of the amended act. He saw as one of his tasks that of fostering respect for and compliance with the Liquor Act. As a means of disseminating information regarding the administration of the Act, Bishop introduced a monthly publication entitled the "Liquor Act Bulletin" in October of 1922 in which he wrote material which he hoped would be used in prepared press articles, addresses, sermons and discussions. In effect the Liquor Commissioner became a specialized "Minister of Propaganda" who attempted to create a moral atmosphere in the province which would dissuade anyone from breaking the liquor laws.[33] In addition to appealing to religious feelings, Bishop used patriotism and veiled allusions to racial superiority to express his views. At one point he had stated; "Systematic defiance of laws of a disciplinary character may appeal to some people as good sport, but it isn't playing the game in the British way."[34] Such references would not gain support for prohibition from the non-Anglo-Saxon population of the province.

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[31] Monthly Bulletin, Social Service Council, April, 1922, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[32] Ibid.

[33] "Fifty Years", A.L.C.B., 1974, quoted from The Canadian Bar Review, March, 1924.

[34] Ibid.

The passing of the new amendments made the Moderation League and its allies realize that the only way to pressure for any change was to use the very method the prohibitionists had used in 1915; a referendum called after the presentation of a petition containing the signatures of at least 8% of the provinces' eligible voters. Therefore the two groups, the Hotelkeepers and the Moderation League worked throughout 1922 to get support for their petitions. The Hotelkeepers were asking for a referendum on the sale of beer, while the Moderation League concentrated on a system which would regulate alcohol and allow people to have the minimum amount of liquor "in a pure, wholesome way,"[35] which would lead to a "more satisfied, contented and temperate people, and the laws of the country will be infinitely better kept, under a minimum cost of administration."[36] The answer was government control of the sale and distribution of beer and other spirits. Quebec and British Columbia provided the examples of government control already in operation in Canada. The Moderationists were quick to point to the "substantial" revenues which these governments were deriving from government control.

While the Moderation League was pressing the idea of government control, various prohibition organizations, the Social Service Council, W.C.T.U. branches and citizens' associations expressed their approval and satisfaction with the Liquor Act, the government's

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[35] Betts to Brownlee, November 25, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[36] Ibid.

enforcement of it and the appointment of Rev. Bishop as the Commissioner.[37] They also condemned the idea of government control, pointing to the undesirable effects of government control in British Columbia, the increases in drunkenness, crime and the general wide-open nature of alcohol consumption in the province.[38] At public meetings in Calgary and Edmonton, attended by 1,500 people in each case, Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung and ministers from the Presbyterian and Methodist churches addressed the audiences, calling for continued prohibition, with stronger restrictions.[39] At a time when many people under the influence of the Moderation League were dissatisfied with a system which seemed to control a rather personal and individual matter like one's right to drink, the prohibition organizations like the W.C.T.U. refused to accept that changing attitude. Instead they continued to believe that it was "better to give the Law a chance by rigid enforcement of same, regardless of the status of the individual."[40]

By 1923, the Moderationists were ready for their assault upon prohibition and indirectly upon the U.F.A., for the government was going to be placed in the awkward position of presenting anti-prohibition petitions, and framing a referendum for a vote, while

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[37]Resolutions of Citizens of Edmonton to Greenfield, March 29, 1922, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[38]Social Service Council to Greenfield, March 17, 1922, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[39]Edmonton Bulletin, March 30, 1922.

[40]Edmonton West-end W.C.T.U. resolution to Greenfield, February 9, 1922, P. Papers, P.A.A.

trying to keep the whole issue out of politics by acting in an impartial manner. On January 30 Greenfield presented the Hotelkeepers' beer petition as a private member's bill. As other private members had declined to present the position because of the possible stigma attached to such an action, Greenfield undertook the job as, "We can't stand too much on the technicalities for the application of 51,000 people has a right to consideration in the Legislature."[41]

A special house committee of five members, chaired by V.W. Smith was established to inquire into the bona fides of the petition.[42] In addition each member of the House was asked to report on the genuineness of the signatures from his own constituency. Most members did so, but some refused, leaving the job to the committee.[43] Once again the prohibition supporters including U.F.A. and U.F.W.A. locals registered their total opposition to the petition, arguing that the petition was not in the best interests of the province,[44] and pointing out irregularities in the petition.[45] In the Legislature, Mrs. McClung accused the hotelmen of having used improper materials such as hotel register sheets and writing paper to collect signatures which were

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[41] Edmonton Bulletin, January 30, 1923. There were some legal doubts as to whether under the Direct Legislation Act it would be sufficient to have the petition presented by a clerk of the house. Greenfield felt that the petition should be introduced in the regular manner by a member, so he undertook its presentation.

[42] Ibid., February 6, 1923. [43] Ibid., February 12, 1923.

[44] W.C.T.U. of Stettler to Greenfield, January 27, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[45] W.C.T.U. of Olds to Greenfield, February 23, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A.

often illegible, or from people living outside the province or belonging to people of indeterminate age or residence.[46]

While the committee was deliberating about the Hotelkeepers' petition, the first of the Moderation League's petitions calling for "absolute government control" arrived from the Nanton constituency.[47] Throughout February and March, the petitions poured into the Premier's office. Although the signatures of farmers did appear on the petitions, the majority of support came from small businessmen, merchants, and tradespeople, suggesting that urban centers, including towns, were more interested than the rural areas in re-establishing the general use of liquor. It was only in the northern areas of the province and in districts with a large non-English population, like Lac La Biche, that farmers expressed approval of government control.[48]

The presence of two petitions created a dilemma for the U.F.A. Although it was clear that the legislature was morally and legally bound to allow a vote on the beer question, especially in light of the U.F.A.'s election pledge to effect "such legislation for the control of the Liquor Act as the people have sanctioned by referendum,"[49] there was strong opposition among the U.F.A. members to having the Hotelmen's proposals put into effect, for they realized that the sale of beer in hotels and by glass, would immediately reopen the

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[46] Edmonton Bulletin, February 16, 1923.

[47] Ibid., February 15, 1923.

[48] Moderation League Petition, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[49] U.F.A. Election Platform 1921, Winnifred Ross Papers, P.A.A.

bars.[50] Many members felt that the plebiscite should be widened to include a preferential ballot, which would offer the alternative of government control as well as the beer question.[51]

By April 13, the House committee had declared that both petitions were in order. The U.F.A. caucus seemed to favor the establishment of another non-partisan legislature committee to decide the nature of the ballot. The caucus did not want the government to be entirely responsible for the success or failure of the beer petition so they felt that the legislature as a whole should decide the issue.[52] However the matter was turned over to the Cabinet, with the onus upon Greenfield to bring the matter up in the House. It was apparent that the strong prohibition supporters in the U.F.A. caucus, Sam Brown, A.L. Sanders, L. Peterson, J.C. Buckley and William Fedun, were totally opposed to a preferential ballot which would include government control. Many members were privately of the opinion that it was useless to caucus further, so the battle was to be fought in the House.[53]

On April 16, before packed galleries, a decision was reached to agree to Greenfield's proposal to allow a vote on a number of alternative proposals as well as the Hotelmen's "Temperance Act" petition. The Premier pointed out that under the Direct Legislation Act, the legislature had the right to enact a temperance bill which would

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[50] Edmonton Bulletin, April 2, 1923.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., April 13, 1923.

[53] Ibid.

accomplish the purpose of the petition, without referring to the electors, but as he was sure that the House would not entertain such an idea, the government would institute a referendum.[54] In order to obtain an adequate expression of public opinion, Greenfield felt it would be wise to place alternate questions of liquor legislation on the referendum.[55] Therefore he also proposed that the legislature appoint a committee from each group in the House to frame the questions on the referendum. He was also emphatic in declaring that his proposal should not be considered an embodiment of his government's policy as it was his intention to keep the liquor laws out of politics.[56] His statement caused Boyle to state that the U.F.A., supposedly representative of the people, came to the House without having a policy to recommend thereby showing they were not a responsible administration in that they were "throwing up their hands, begging for advice."[57]

The debate continued through the next day. Finally at 11:30 in the evening the Legislature adopted Greenfield's proposal for a preferential ballot and for the establishment of another committee to decide the nature of the referendum. The vote was 36 to 16 with a solid Liberal opposition supported by four U.F.A. members: Carson,

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[54] Edmonton Journal, April 17, 1923.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Edmonton Bulletin, April 17, 1923.

[57] Ibid.

Moore, Brown and Fedun. Once again Boyle attacked the U.F.A.'s evasion of responsibility because of the "delicate nature of the proposals which ran counter to the U.F.A. principles."[58] He also stated that:

> It's not a question of keeping the Liquor question out of politics but of taking it in. Politics is the conduct of public business and besides the U.F.A. had adopted prohibition as a party plank.[59]

While Boyle charged that the government was using the committee as an alibi for the future in case they should be called to account for their actions, Mrs. McClung wondered who was the "dark horse pressing the government for government control of liquor."[60] As she thought that it was the government itself, she obviously did not know of the confidential meetings between Greenfield, Brownlee and the liquor interests. Brownlee's answer is evidence of his realistic assessment of the situation for he expressed the opinion that prohibition was not a delicate flower to be shielded from every blast for if it was not implanted in the hearts of the people it would not last.[61] Although Greenfield argued that the U.F.A. had not broken faith with their constituents because he had received requests from U.F.A. locals for the government to submit more than one question, there is little evidence in the U.F.A. paper or in the Premier's Papers to support that statement. In fact the U.F.A. locals favored the system as it stood and deplored any possible

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[58] Edmonton Bulletin, April 18, 1923.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid. [61] Ibid.

change to government control.[62]

Although the U.F.A. government was under pressue to allow the beer question advocates and the Moderation League the right to be represented in the referendum, not only on legal and moral grounds, but also from behind the scenes, one must not forget that the U.F.A. also stood for more participation from all political groups in the political process as a matter of principle. As the U.F.A. noted:

> ...it is notable that since the present Government came into power, the Assembly has ceased to be a mere voting machine in the hands of the Cabinet. The influence of the private members is greater than it has been in the past. They take a large share of responsibility and participate in the affairs of the Legislature more freely than have the members of any former assembly.[63]

The special committee created by the House consisted of four members; George McLachlin, U.F.A.; Dr. J.S. Stewart, Conservative; W.M. Davidson, Independent; and Fred White, Labor. A fifth member, G. Mills, a Liberal, declined the offer to participate in non-partisan politics. After several days of deliberation, the committee recommended to the House that the Direct Legislation Act be amended to allow four questions.[64] Although the prohibitionists and the proponents of the four question referendum debated at great length about the measure, the recommendation was accepted and the amendment made on April 21.[65]

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[62] The U.F.A., February 15, 1923.

[63] Ibid., May 1, 1923.

[64] Edmonton Bulletin, April 20, 1923.

[65] Ibid., April 21, 1923.

The preferential ballot, drawn up for the vote which was to be held on November 5, 1923, contained four choices: Clause A, prohibition, which meant the continuance and development of the Liquor Act; Clause B, the licensed sale of beer in licensed hotels and other premises; Clause C, the government sale of beer to be consumed in private residences, and the sale of other liquors through Doctor's prescriptions for medicinal purposes only; and Clause D, the government sale of all liquors, with beer to be consumed on licensed premises and in private residences, and wine and spirits to be purchased in limited quantities under permit issued by the government, under government control and regulation.[66] The stage was now set for the final confrontation between the Prohibitionists and the Moderationists, which would culminate in the end of the prohibition era in Alberta.

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[66] The U.F.A., May 1, 1923.

CHAPTER III

THE END OF PROHIBITION AND THE BEGINNING OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL

A Time of Change

Prohibition may have been proving itself to be an unsatisfactory method of controlling drunkenness and liquor consumption, however without the conjunction of several important factors, prohibition might have been able to continue in Alberta until 1926, when Ontario finally voted in government control. Although the United Farmers of Ontario under E.C. Drury had been voted out of office in 1923, enough support still existed in Ontario to "hold the line" in 1924.[1] In Alberta the outcome of the referendum in 1923 denoted the end of an idealistic era, an end to the belief that a single sweeping reform could change society and an end to the attitude that all liquor consumption was bad. The U.F.A., on the grounds of keeping the liquor question out of politics did little to support their one-time political platform, concentrating instead on a new crusade, the establishment of the cooperative Wheat Pool. The Moderation League, heavily financed by the provincial breweries launched a campaign which appealed to the rational and moderate view of temperance and the importance of individualism to Alberta's citizens.

Although the W.C.T.U. had concluded that "...only in very restricted circles is alcohol considered necessary,"[2] a more popular attitude was the feeling that alcohol could be an aid to digestion, that

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[1] Richard Allen, The Social Passion, Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 273. The fact that Irene Parlby, U.F.A. member from Claresholm, did campaign for prohibition may have had some effect in giving Clause A the majority in that district.

[2] The Annual Report of the W.C.T.U. Convention, 1924, Glenbow Alberta Institute Archives, Calgary.

moderate use of alcohol would not shorten one's life span and that liquor formed an important aspect of a congenial lifestyle.[3] People were warned not to classify alcohol as a drug or a poison along with opium or arsenic, for "after all the opium den is not a place for good-fellowship or merriment."[4] It was also stressed that prohibition was an irrational concept:

> A law enforcing absolute abstinence from alcohol upon a command, is exactly on the same logical level as a law which might enforce the consumption of a quart of milk per citizen per day.[5]

By the 1920s many of the temperance reformers' ideas on the benefits of prohibition, which they had employed to such good advantage during World War I, had fallen into disfavor. English liberalism and Victorian temperance movements had provided many of the ideas which influenced the Progressives in the United States and the proponents of the social gospel in Canada. In mid-nineteenth century England, a belief in a value system of respectability and middle-class morals was reflected in the ideas of Joseph Livesay and John Bright, who argued that the non-respectable working class brought their troubles upon themselves because of their "shiftless" and drunken habits.[6] While some reformers, such as Robert Owen, Charles Dickens and Edwin Chadwick stressed the environmental factors causing drunkenness, the most attractive plan was

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[3]George Hunter, "The Effect of Alcohol on Man," Canadian Forum, Vol. 7 (1926-1927), pp. 73-4.

[4]Ibid. [5]Ibid.

[6]J.B. Brown, "Drink and Poverty in Late Victorian England - The Pig or the Stye," International Review of Social History, Vol. XVIII (1973), p. 384.

to focus on a single vice, such as drunkenness. As alcohol was widely supposed to be at the root of all other sins, it became a convenient outlet for general moral indignation.[7] Moreover, in Victorian England, other social problems such as prostitution and the sex-related questions could not be discussed openly, therefore the reformers focused on the "safe" topic of alcohol.[8]

Such views were reflected in Canada's drive for prohibition in the early twentieth century. In 1915 Nellie McClung had written:

> The liquor traffic is a tangible definite thing that we can locate without difficulty. Many of the causes of poverty and sin are elusive, indefinite qualities such as bad management, carelessness, laziness, extravagance, ignorance and bad judgement, which are exceedingly hard to remedy, but the liquor traffic is one of the things we can speak of definitely, and in removing it we are taking a step in the direction of giving everybody a fair start.[9]

Later in 1945, she wrote:

> We believed the enemies we had to fight were ignorance, greed, intolerance and boredom. It is easy to see why we concentrated on the liquor traffic. It was corporeal and always present; it walked our streets; it threw its challenge in our faces.[10]

Prohibitionists had operated on the assumption that a government, through popular support from the people, could change or neutralize the habits of large groups by well-written legislation and honest

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[7] Ibid., p. 385.

[8] Ibid., p. 386.

[9] Nellie L. McClung, In Times Like These (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 101.

[10] Nellie L. McClung, The Stream Runs Fast (Toronto: Thomas Allen Limited, 1945), p. 62.

enforcement.[11]

However by 1923, there was a new attitude that people should no longer resort to a law to make up deficiencies in other agencies, or that a law could be used as a short cut to a desired end.[12] The liquor statutes had been unenforceable because they did not represent an overwhelming majority of public opinion. The move became one of a "real and fundamental" approach to the alcohol problem.[13] Many people recognized that diversity within a nation or even a province could not be overlooked. Alcohol played a very important part in the daily lives of many people whose background was from various European countries. Prior to the discovery of other drugs, such as coffee, opium and cocaine in North America and Asia, Europeans had relied solely upon alcohol and they had used it in a variety of ways; "...as a social beverage, before meals, apertif, a thirst-quenching beverage, during meals, an after-dinner drink, an evening drink, a night-cap, a tranquilizer, a sedative, a religious offering, an anesthetic, a deliriant, and as a means of getting drunk."[14] To expect the many races that made up the population of Western Canada to accept the removal of liquor was not a concept which would find favor for long. Furthermore many religious

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[11] David T. Musto, The American Disease, Origins of Narcotic Control (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 66.

[12] Raymond B. Fosdick and Albert L. Scott, Toward Liquor Control (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1933), p. 8.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Edward M. Breckner, Licit and Illicit Drugs (New York: Consumer's Union, 1972), p. 195.

and social leaders were aware that the people were becoming restive under any restriction after the tension of the war, and that they were of the opinion that prohibition had increased lawlessness.[15]

As had been the case with the Liberal government, the U.F.A. had problems with enforcing the law. Brownlee criticized the R.C.M.P. for their lack of cooperation in assisting law enforcement in Alberta, particularly their reluctance to patrol the border.[16] A labor member from Rocky Mountain House, P.M. Christopher, pointed out that the R.C.M.P. did do something, as they "pried into labor head quarters, looked over the books and tried to find if anyone had a copy of Karl Marx's works."[17] The attitude towards the A.P.P. also differed little from that of the Liberal administration. Private citizens often lashed out at the A.P.P., accusing them of "having a good time in blind pigs."[18] It was also thought that the A.P.P. was spending too much time trying to enforce the Liquor Act while ignoring other problems.[19]

At the same time, the A.P.P. often found it difficult to make arrests and prosecute cases. In one case in which a certain John Huppie of Grandin was arrested and charged for supplying Indians with liquor

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[15] E.B. Ross, Government Sale of Liquor in Canada: Ten Years Experience (Seattle: Lex Publishing Co., 1932), p. 15.

[16] Edmonton Bulletin, April 11, 1923.

[17] Ibid.

[18] P. Robinson to H. Greenfield, August 6, 1923. P. Papers, P.A.A. Edmonton.

[19] Lethbridge Daily Herald, October 24, 1923. The A.P.P. tended to receive criticism whether they enforced prohibition or not.

and for possessing a still, Constable Fred Moses of the A.P.P. saw that Huppie was really a "novice at the game while the more (sic) shrewder ones escape detection."[20] Adding to their difficulties was the fact that moonshining was popular throughout the province:

> Breeds and Frenchmen still continue to go North and some of them are moonshiners and the police in the North will have their hands full this winter and in the future as some of those gone North are thieves and will manufacture booze.[21]

The A.P.P. was also under attack for the methods they had to use to obtain convictions. The police often paid "down-and-outers" twenty five dollars to bring in convictions.[22] Obviously any police force given the task of administering such a personal and controversial law would face criticism whether they strictly enforced it or not.

Throughout the summer and early fall of 1923 the Prohibitionists and the Moderationists waged a rather tame campaign. The greatest excitement and public interest had occured during March, when the U.F.A. government had been engaged in drafting the referendum ballot, however once that was done and the government had no obvious part in the campaign, public interest waned. The prohibition forces included some of the provincial newspapers notably the Edmonton Bulletin, Edmonton Journal and Lethbridge Daily Herald, the Alberta W.C.T.U., the Alberta Prohibition Association, and several Methodist and Presbyterian ministers.

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[20] A.P.P. Crime Report, "A" Division Lac La Biche Detachment, September 3, 1922, George Fredrick Moses Papers, Glenbow, Calgary.

[21] Detachment Diary, September 3-9, 1922. General Review, George Fredrick Papers, Glenbow, Calgary.

[22] Edmonton Journal, October 4, 1923.

Mrs. Louise McKinney, long an ardent and active supporter of prohibition, was president of the provincial W.C.T.U. The Alberta Prohibition Association, organized in early 1923 as the successor to the Social Service League, had H.H. Hull, the General Secretary as its main spokesman. Irene Parlby, the only member of the U.F.A. government and cabinet to campaign for prohibition, was joined by individual supporters of prohibition as well as Rev. Mr. McLachlan of the Presbyterian Church, Toronto based Rev. John Coburn, and Rev. Ben Spence all of the Methodist Church.

On the opposing side, the provincial Moderation League, included such people as R.A. Darker, the President, C. Conybeare, K.C. of Lethbridge, J.N. Ritchie, Colonel C.Y. Weaver, D.S.O. from Edmonton, William Cousins and F.C. Potts. Other outspoken critics of prohibition were Major-General Griesbach, Professor Alexander of the University of Alberta, and Michael Clarke, a doctor in Medicine Hat. Support from the provincial breweries, the Veterans Associations and Labor Unions was more indirect. Their influence only became apparent after the referendum results were in, when they began to make their demands more openly.

Much of the Prohibitionists' campaign centered around the ambiguous and contradictory character of Clause D. Many citizens in Alberta seemed to be confused as to the meaning of Clause D. John Hunt, writing to Greenfield in August summed up the major problems:

> What are the words "licensed premises" meant to include? Does "beer to be consumed on licensed premises" include "beer to be sold on licensed premises?" [23]

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[23] John Hunt to H. Greenfield, August 10, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

Not only were the voters confused, but a group of Alberta newspapermen were also baffled by the whole ballot. They asked Greenfield to enlighten the electors and themselves as to the Government's interpretation of the meaning of the four choices, especially Clause D.[24] However, the Edmonton Journal pointed out that the government could not be of any help because they had no part in drafting the ballot. Furthermore, one of the four drafters of the ballot, who was unnamed, admitted that no one knew what Clause D meant.[25]

The Prohibitionists pointed out that both Clause B and D would mean a return of the bar. While Clause D allowed the widest consumption of liquor, Clause B limited the sale of beer to licensed premises, however Clause C advocated government control of beer sales, maintaining the old system in relation to other liquor.[26] The Prohibitionists tried to show that government control was a failure in places where it had been in effect for several years. The British Columbia situation was particularly useful to them, for reports were coming out of that province stating it was as flooded with liquor as it had been under the old saloon system.[27] Moreover people were still wasting their money

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[24] Lethbridge Daily Herald, October 16, 1923.

[25] Edmonton Journal, October 30, 1923.

[26] "The Alberta Referendum Ballot," Alberta Prohibition Association Campaign Pamphlet, The Earl Goodwin Cook Papers, Glenbow, Calgary.

[27] Lethbridge Daily Herald, October 20, 1923.

on liquor instead of spending it on the essentials such as food and clothing.[28] Irene Parlby and the W.C.T.U. contended that the public was being mesmerized with three little phrases, "Personal Liberty", "Prohibition is a Failure", and "Government Control is the Only Thing."[29] Parlby pointed out that there had never been a law which did not interfere with someone's personal liberty, therefore if people believed that prohibition had been a failure, they should ask themselves "What have I done to make it a success?" The problem was not that prohibition was a failure, but rather that the people had failed in their loyalty to the laws of their province.[30] Her final attack against "the great Hallelujah chorus of the Moderationists,"[31] that government control would definitely work, argued that if the prohibition law had not been adhered to, why would it be expected that a new law would be followed?[32] The example of failure to control liquor sales in British Columbia once again was used to prove the ineffectiveness of government control.

The Prohibitionists generally objected to putting the government in an impossible position by placing it in charge of the liquor business.[33] Some went so far as to accuse the U.F.A., and especially Greenfield of really supporting Clause D because of the revenue it would

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[28]"The Alberta Referendum Ballot", Alberta Prohibition Association Campaign Pamphlet, The Earl Goodwin Cook Papers, Glenbow, Calgary.

[29]The Albertan, October 10, 1923.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., November 3, 1923.

produce, since he declined the invitation of the Prohibitionists to state his position.[34] It is possible that the men of the U.F.A. government did support Clause D to some extent, mainly for the much needed revenues, however, even if they did support prohibition they had promised to stay out of the issue, so they could not really express their opinions.

The prohibition forces were confident, rather optimistically so, that the women of the province would unite to ensure prohibition's victory:

> Women are going to vote for prohibition because they know it is in the best interests of the people, physically, morally, economically; because they feel it is putting a higher standard on the laws of the country. They are going to vote for prohibition because they are idealists...very practical persons...who get things done.[35]

Such confidence was misplaced, because women really did not represent any special class, rather they were an integral part of society, reflecting the same interests, desires and values as prevailed among men. Although women had secured the vote, the idealistic hope that they would "clean-up" party politics had been proven to be false for those very reasons.[36]

As for the Moderation League, accused of not promoting moderation, but selfishness and greed instead,[37] in turn classified prohibition as class legislation in which those of social or political prominence were

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[34] The Albertan, November 3, 1923.

[35] The U.F.A., November 1, 1923.

[36] C.E. Bacchi-Ferraro, "The Ideas of the Canadian Suffragists 1890-1920," M.A. Thesis, McGill, 1969, p. 132.

[37] Edmonton Journal, October 2, 1923.

not brought before the courts, while the poor always got arrested.[38] The League also contended that continued prohibition would mean the use of an espionage system and outrageously severe penalties.[39] Moreover, the League appealed to government financial problems, emphasizing that the government should get the profits from liquor sales instead of the bootleggers.[40] It pointed out that one benefit from liquor revenue would mean lower taxes. On the other hand they argued that with continued prohibition the tourist traffic was being turned away and that only the rich could still get liquor.[41]

Throughout the campaign, the U.F.A. as a government made no statements supporting either side. Meanwhile the farm organization and the locals, while supporting the cause played little part in any kind of obvious campaigning. Perhaps some of the reason for the U.F.A.'s disinterest in the prohibition issue can be explained by their preoccupation with their new crusade, the formation of the Alberta Wheat Pool. This is illustrated by James Gray who has drawn a comparison between prohibition and the farmers' desire for some agency to regulate grain sales:

> Like the confirmed alcoholics who worked for prohibition, they saw the ending of the futures market as freeing them from the temptation to gamble on margins on wheat futures.[42]

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[38] Edmonton Journal, October 30, 1933.

[39] Lethbridge Daily Herald, October 29, 1923.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Edmonton Bulletin, November 3, 1923.

[42] James H. Gray, The Roar of the Twenties (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 122.

Prohibition had once been a personal concern for members of the U.F.A., however the liquor issue became one that the Cabinet could handle. Working for the Wheat Pool, collecting signatures and passing out information about the Pool was the new and vital concern which engaged the interests of the farmers' organization during the crucial prohibition campaign period.

Further evidence of this trend is noted in the June 15th edition of the U.F.A., which devoted an eight page supplement to cooperative marketing.[43] Then, too, on July 3, Henry Wise Wood stated that a Cooperative Wheat Marketing System would definitely be established and brought in the great American Cooperative organizer Aaron Sapiro to tour the province advocating the merits of a wheat pool.[44] Throughout the following months of August, September and October the U.F.A. locals were intent upon getting the required acreage signed up for the pool. By August 31, 2,109,094 acres had been signed but 773,704 more acres were needed by September 5, if the pool was to be operative for the 1923 crop year.[45] By October 20, the U.F.A. was able to announce the Alberta Wheat Pool would go into operation on October 29, 1923.[46] The energies of many U.F.A. members had been taken up by campaigning for

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[43] The U.F.A., June 15, 1923.

[44] Ibid., July 3, 1923.

[45] Ibid., August 31, 1923.

[46] The Albertan, October 20, 1923.

the Wheat Pool rather than for prohibition. In forming the Pool, the U.F.A. was truly doing something to improve the economic situation of Alberta's farmers. Beside such an important move, prohibition would have far less significance.

In addition to the government's interest in the Wheat Pool, they had reason to regard the return of liquor sales as a possible financial life-saver. An economic depression on the prairies since the end of World War I had caused the U.F.A. to institute cutbacks in government spending. Consequently, many employees were laid off,[47] and the civil service as asked for greater efficiency, fewer absences from work, an end to tardiness, and an end to waste of time and stationery.[48]

The opposition Liberal party led by J. Boyle charged the U.F.A. with over spending on too large a budget for 1922, calling for retrenchment and even suggesting that the government could eliminate the $6,000 a year Liquor Commissioner.[49] The U.F.A. found that by the end of 1922, they had added $1,910,302 to the 1921 debt of $2,118,209. The U.F.A. found that expenditures in the areas of administration of justice at $1,567,288; public works at $1,298,235; and education at $2,444,689 soon absorbed the province's $9,324,889 revenues.[50] Some remedy would have to be found, therefore a system which poured all profits from the

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[47] H. Greenfield to the Alberta Civil Service, December 27, 1921, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Edmonton Bulletin, April 11, 1923.

[50] Ibid., February 28, 1923.

sale of liquor, as well as fees, licenses and fines, into the provincial treasury was an attractive idea. Meanwhile, the U.F.A. farm organization itself, suffered from a decline in membership and resources. Thus, by 1922, membership had fallen from the 1920-21 high of approximately 30,000 to 18,829.[51] "Hard times" was the reason frequently given for the decline, therefore the U.F.A. and U.F.W.A. locals were constantly engaged in membership drives.[52]

During the last two weeks prior to the referendum, as the momentum of the campaigns increased, so did the public interest. On October 25, the Lethbridge Daily Herald, followed by the other major provincial newspapers, offered the Moderationists and the Prohibitionists two columns a day to be used for a forum.[53] The Calgary Herald announced on November 3, that it was arranging a most complete coverage of the referendum by using radio, ten phone-in telephone lines, megaphones, bulletin boards and extra editions of the newspaper to bring Albertans immediate vote results.[54] As an added attraction, outside the Herald building, motion pictures would be shown between the flashing of returns.[55]

As the voting day neared, feelings were already running a little high, when the most exciting event of the campaign occurred November 1,

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[51] The Annual Report, of the U.F.W.A., 1922, Winnifred Ross Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

[52] Ibid.

[53] The Lethbridge Daily Herald, October 25, 1923.

[54] Calgary Herald, November 3, 1923.

[55] Ibid.

at a Prohibition rally at the Victoria Pavillion in Calgary. While Frank Oliver criticized the ballot for being both dishonest and unfair, much like the Moderation League Literature,[56] and condemned the U.F.A. government for their rejection of prohibition and accused them of opportunism seizing upon a measure which would give the government revenue,[57] scuffles broke out in the crowd. The police were forced to intervene, and consequently five persons were ejected. Prohibition supporters contended that men from the Moderation League had disrupted the rally, but the Moderationists declared a Salvation Army man had struck a veteran which had started the fights.[58]

Although some of the newspapers supported the continuance of prohibition, the majority vote for government control made it clear that public opinion was not easily swayed by the opinions of the press. The newspapers with Liberal sympathies such as the Edmonton Bulletin, supported prohibition because it had been a Liberal government measure, and furthermore influential editors like Frank Oliver were strong advocates of prohibition. It is not as clear why the Conservative newspaper, the Edmonton Journal, once a "wet" supporter, would have switched its allegiance to prohibition. Perhaps it was convinced by the evidence that prohibition had made social gains in Alberta[59] and that beer by the glass sales in British Columbia since 1922 had

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[56] Ibid., November 2, 1923. [57] Ibid. [58] Ibid.

[59] James H. Gray, The Roar of the Twenties (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 122. By the spring of 1933 the Journal had become a prohibition advocate.

led to a marked increase in drunkenness and crime.[60]

Prior to the vote thenewspapers gave their final pronouncements on the referendum issue. The Edmonton Journal warned its readers "not to take a leap into the dark", as it was better to continue with the present system.[61] The law should not be changed until the nature of the new experiment could be examined from the example of the three provinces which had government control.[62] The Bulletin also favored the continuation of prohibition which had proved itself to be better than the conditions which had existed before or the ones which currently existed in British Columbia.[63]

The U.F.A. noted that the decision reached in the forthcoming vote would have a vital bearing on the future of the province, both socially and economically.[64] Therefore:

> The result of the voting should be a clear expression of the will of the people, based not upon any sort of prejudice, or upon a cursory examination of the issues at stake, but upon considered judgement.[65]

While it was apparent to the U.F.A. government that differences of opinion existed among the government members about the liquor question, the paper reiterated the position of the 1923 U.F.A. Convention resolutions which had reaffirmed their total support of prohibition, and the

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[60] Edmonton Journal, October 30, 1923.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Edmonton Bulletin, November 3, 1923.

[63] The U.F.A., October 15, 1923.

[64] Ibid. [65] Ibid.

government's handling of The Liquor Act, as well as their opposition to government sale of liquor for beverage purposes.[66] The locals of the farmers' organization obviously still supported prohibition, and would basically continue to do so after government control was enacted; however, the U.F.A. government had responded to the wishes of many other Albertans.

On November 5, 1923, with fine weather across the province,[67] Albertans went to the polls to choose, by preferential ballot, a method of dealing with the liquor question. Approximately 161,000 people cast votes out of a possible 325,000 voters.[68] Clause D was the obvious winner, gathering 93,490 votes over Clause A which received only 61,780 votes. The Calgary Herald noted that little excitement or celebration had greeted the results. After the last returns had come in the streets emptied, prompting the observation that the "people acted moderation as they voted for it."[69] The jubiliation and great sense of victory, largely connected to the patriotism of the war effort that surrounded the advent of prohibition in 1915, did not exist in 1923. A certain sense of apathy and acceptance pervaded the 1920s in Canada. A great battle had not been waged and won, rather a quiet retreat had taken place. After a conference with Brownlee and Reid, Greenfield issued his statement at one o'clock the morning of November 6, that the government

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Calgary Herald, November 5, 1923.

[68] Appendix, Table 7: Census Population and Intercensal Estimates of the Population of Alberta.

[69] Calgary Herald, November 6, 1923. Clause B received 3,936 votes and Clause C received 3,078. The Clause D voters gave 38,883 second choice votes for Clause B and 35,840 votes for Clause C. Refusals to give a second choice numbered 78,268.

would have to bring in new stocks of liquor and that a new act would be drafted at the next regular session of the Legislature.[70] Brownlee also commented that whatever one's personal opinion was, the vote had been decisive and the will of the electorate had to be fairly carried out. However, he hoped that Albertans would remember that prohibition would still be enforced until the new act was passed.[71]

The Edmonton Journal noted certain demographic aspects of the referendum vote. It reported the French vote in places such as Beaver River, Lac La Biche and St. Albert had favored Clause D, the north and south of the province had gone "wet", as did all the cities, while the central area, south of Edmonton had registered a "dry" vote.[72] Perhaps those central constituencies had stayed with prohibition because of solid base in agriculture and a predominantly Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian population, embracing the values of social gospel reform.

Both the newspapers and the U.F.A. politicians accepted the results of the referendum with resignation. The Edmonton Journal[73] and the Bulletin mentioned a change of mind among voters who had come to believe that legislation could not stop the sale and use of liquor.[74] The Bulletin recognized that with the end of the first World War, the "popular willingness to make self-denials for the common good" had also come to an

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[70] Ibid. [71] Edmonton Journal, November 6, 1923.

[72] Appendix, Table 6: Constituency Vote for 1923 Referendum, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton. Edmonton City had recorded a high prohibition vote, perhaps reflecting some influence from the Journal and Bulletin. This same influence may even have been felt in the districts south of Edmonton, which would likely receive Edmonton newspapers.

[73] Edmonton Journal, November 6, 1923.

[74] Edmonton Bulletin, November 7, 1923.

end.[75] The Bulletin deplored the exaggeration of the claims that bootlegging flourished during prohibition; the propaganda that the liquor interests had employed since the end of the war; and the lack of education of people who could vote in 1923, but who did not know about the old days.[76] The U.F.A. also tried to persuade its readers that it was the "plain duty of Prohibitionists and Moderationists, to cooperate in securing the best legislation in addition to building a body of public opinion to help enforce the new law."[77] The Calgary Herald was pleased at the general and unanimous nature of the vote for Clause D, and expressed the opinion that the government should invite the advice of business and professional men to help them formulate the new act, possibly suggesting that either the businessmen mentioned could be the brewery officials, or that the U.F.A. were too inexperienced to create a liquor act.[78] Outside the province, the reaction was mixed. Saskatchewan newspapers were not happy with the results as they realized that government sale of liquor in Manitoba and Alberta would make enforcement of prohibition more difficult.[79] On the other hand, the British Columbia Moderation League sent a message to Alberta commending the province's support for the "age-old heritage of personal liberty."[80]

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[75] Ibid. [76] Ibid.

[77] The U.F.A., November 15, 1923.

[78] Calgary Herald, November 6, 1923.

[79] Ibid. [80] Ibid.

Although the prohibition supporters were disappointed, they felt that the setback was only temporary.[81] The 1924 W.C.T.U. Convention stated optimistically that:

> The cause of right may be retarded, but it cannot be stopped, so in spite of the defeat we suffered on November 5th, we are on the winning side and are going forward to certain victory.[82]

The path back to prohibition was to focus on continuing the campaign of education for "Final victory will not be won by spasmodic efforts, but by a steady, persistent, campaign of enlightenment."[83] In the years following 1923, the remaining prohibition forces continued to work for prohibition, frequently applying pressure to the U.F.A. government to tighten up the government control Liquor Act.

Once it was clear the prohibition was defeated, the responsibility for formulating a new liquor control act which would embody the principles of Clause D, fell upon the U.F.A. However, they did not lack for help from the eager Moderation League who felt they had an important role to play in framing the new act. The League took credit for the "great success.. ..in overthrowing the tyrannical Prohibition party..."[84] and A.E. Cross of the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company stated that:

> We shall try and make a very fair, reasonable law, so that the public will be well served and satisfied with as little abuse as can be avoided, and everybody able to make a reasonable revenue.[85]

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[81] The Annual Report of the W.C.T.U. Convention, 1924, Glenbow Alberta Institute Archives, Calgary.

[82] Ibid. [83] Ibid.

[84] A.E. Cross to F.J. Clarke, November 9, 1923, C.B.M. Co. Papers, Glenbow Archives, Calgary.

[85] Ibid.

R.A. Darker, the President of the League, stated to Premier Greenfield that it was "...only just and right that before any legislation on Clause D is passed, that the views of the Moderation League should be obtained by the Government."[86]

Other supporters of government control also made their demands known to the government. The Army and Navy Veterans Association asked for a license so that they could serve beer in their clubs,[87] and the Lethbridge Trades and Labor Council sent a resolution to Greenfield asking the government to take advice from the Moderation League so as "... to get as wide an interpretation of Clause D as possible...."[88] Pressure upon the U.F.A. persisted. For example, the Moderation League sent the Premier a pamphlet on the Quebec system of government control in which they advocated and suggested a nine point government control program including the provisions for no drinks to be sold over the bars; the sale of 4% beer; the sale of tea, soft drinks and light lunches in bars; all revenues from liquor taxes, permits and licenses to go to the government; and the inclusion of a local option clause which would prohibit the opening of a government vendor store in a district where a prohibition by-law existed.[89] Once again, A.E. Cross wrote a private letter to Greenfield offering his services and information on any

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[86]R.A. Darker to H. Greenfield, November 6, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

[87]The Army and Navy Veterans Association to H. Greenfield, November 26, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

[88]Resolution from Lethbridge Trades and Labor Council to H. Greenfield, November 21, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

[89]Moderation League to H. Greenfield, November 30, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

subject Greenfield might need help. He carefully pointed out that he had no objective in mind other than to help draft a fair law.[90] However, in the light of his earlier attempted manipulations, it is possible to assume that a closer connection may have existed between the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company and the U.F.A. Cabinet, even though Greenfield's reply seems to suggest some attempt to politely ignore Cross' offer of help:

> If we should get to the point where we feel that advice from or consultation with yourself will be of assistance to us, you may be sure we will call upon you.[91]

Yet, in early December of 1923, Greenfield and Brownlee did ask all organizations concerned with the issue of prohibition or government control to confer with the government regarding the proposed liquor legislation. The Alberta Prohibition Association was the only group which declined the offer. While they appreciated the offer, they felt that as they stood for total prohibition and intended to carry on a vigorous education campaign in the interests of abstinence and prohibition, they were opposed to the principle of making the people partners in the liquor traffic, for this would be compromising their beliefs if they offered suggestions to the government.[92] The Hotel and Restaurant Owners did agree to confer with the cabinet. On November 22, 1923, Mr. Lunney, representative of the Hotel Keepers, informed the Premier and

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[90] A.E. Cross to H. Greenfield, November 23, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

[91] H. Greenfield to A.E. Cross, November 26, 1923.

[92] H.H. Hull to H. Greenfield, December 5, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A.

the Attorney-General that the hotelmen were opposed to any extension of liquor licenses beyond hotels and clubs.[93] The hotelmen were particularly hostile to the idea that restaurants would be allowed to sell beer with meals, for the reason that to compete with the restaurants, the hotels would have to open restaurants which would put the hotels in further economic difficulties. Prohibition had caused many hotels to decay because there had been a lack of money for repairs.[94] Similarly, the Restaurant Keepers met with members of the cabinet on December 3 to present the other side of the argument. Mr. Kolb, acting as spokesman for several other restaurant owners, wanted restaurants, which had licenses to be restaurants prior to November 5, to get beer licenses. He also advocated a one year trial period to be placed on new restaurants before they could get a beer license in order to keep inferior restaurants from opening and that beer would be sold at tables only since selling beer at the lunch counters would be too much like the bars.[95] Kolb was in favor of extending government sale further than any other provinces, in that hours of beer service in restaurants and government stores should be extended to 11:30 P.M. or 12:00 A.M., thus people would not have to break the law by patronizing bootleggers to get their supply of liquor after hours.[96]

Brownlee had serious reservations about such a free system, which

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[93] Liquor Legislation Conference of Alberta Hotelkeepers Association, November 22, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A., Edmonton.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Liquor Legislation Conference with Alberta Restaurant Keepers, December 3, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[96] Ibid.

he felt would aid the habitual drinker and would mean such freedom of alcohol consumption that old system of the bar might as well be returned.[97] On December 17, The Albertan released the information that the government was opposed to giving restaurants licenses and only a few hotels would be allowed to sell beer.[98] Protests against the announcement were widespread and the government received many telegrams objecting to the rigid restrictions. J.N. Ritchie of the Lethbridge Moderation League argued that limiting licenses to a few hotels would create a monopoly and encourage bootlegging;[99] T. Longworth of the Great War Veterans Associations objected to the restriction against beer licenses of Veterans clubs, as achieving that goal had been the dominant issue in the Veternas' vote; and J.S. Kirkham of the Southwestern Alberta Moderation League contended that the U.F.A. government had failed to sense the will of the majority by containing beer and liquor sales to government stores.[100]

While the protests were being made, the U.F.A. was meeting in a three-day caucus to reach some consensus of opinion on the meaning and interpretation of Clause D. Not only was the U.F.A. faced with internal dissension, they were also attacked by Boyle and the Liberals for excessive interference in the liquor question, and for making the liquor issue a part of politics, which the U.F.A. had always tried to avoid.[101] Such criticism was unfair because once the will of the people had been expressed through the referendum vote, the U.F.A. as the government was bound to enact legislation in accordance with that public will under the provisions

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[97] Ibid. [98] The Albertan, December 17, 1923.

[99] J.N. Ritchie to H. Greenfield, December 18, 1923, P. Papers, P.A.A.

[100] T. Longworth to H. Greenfield, December 18, 1923.

[101] The Albertan, December 19, 1923.

of the Direct Legislation Act. When the U.F.A. emerged from their caucus, they remained silent about many things, but had agreed to allow the sale of beer by glass in all hotels.[102] Because the U.F.A. had formulated a new Liquor Act in a secret caucus, they were subject to further criticism for the use of caucus government and for obtaining outside legal advice to draft the new act.[103] However the hotelmen, the Moderation League and the restaurant owners were fairly happy with the new Act, although the Moderation League was not in favor of the local option clause as it had not been included in Clause D.[104]

The new act was not introduced until the spring of 1924. It passed its first reading on April 1, second reading on April 4, and final reading April 16 with the new Liquor Act to become law May 10, 1924.[105]

Under the new system in Alberta, the Liquor Control Board alone could import liquor into the province; the Alberta breweries were allowed to sell wholesale to licensees but had to report their sales to the Board; a permit was necessary to buy spirits and beer from the government stores or breweries; the yearly fee was two dollars for spirits and beer, one dollar for beer only, a single purchase permit was fifty cents and a non-resident could purchase a 30 day permit for one dollar. The local option clause, in response to those who still wanted some degree of prohibition, allowed a local option area to vote against the presence of government stores or hotel beer licenses. Only express order purchases, shipped from the head office in Edmonton could supply

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[102] Ibid., December 21, 1923. [103] The Albertan, December 21, 1923.

[104] Ibid., December 23, 1923. [105] Edmonton Bulletin, April 4, 1924.

an individual's need for liquor in these areas. Beer parlors were permitted to stay open between 7:00 A.M. and 10:00 P.M. Monday to Friday and 9:00 P.M. on Saturday. The government stores in the larger centers and mining camps could stay open between 10:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M., while the rural stores operated between 10:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. All liquor and beer outlets, were to be closed on Sundays, holidays and election days. In cities with a population over 15,000, the hotels paid $400 for a license; those in population centers between 15,000 and 7,000 paid $350; 7,000-1,500 population areas paid $250 and after some debate, Matheson of Vegreville had an amendment to the Act passed which levied a $100 fee instead of $200 for towns under a population of 1,500.[106] Club licenses averaged between $100 and $200 depending on the membership, while golf clubs paid $100 fees. Druggists were limited to a stock of 40 ounces of liquor, and breweries paid a $2,000 license to deliver beer, in addition to a tax on all the beer they manufactured, which was easier to collect than a tax on the amount sold would have been.[107] There were fewer difficulties in checking the amounts, therefore the cost of administration would be reduced. The Board was not allowed to advertise, but newspapers could carry ads, since Brownlee had pointed out that papers from other provinces would come into the province, making the Act discriminatory against local papers.[108] The central feature of the Liquor Act was the control exercised by the Liquor Control Board under the first Commissioner, R.J. Dinning, a Lethbridge banker. The Board had broad powers: to manage and supervise

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[106] Edmonton Bulletin, April 2, 1924.

[107] Ibid. [108] Ibid., April 4, 1924.

all government liquor stores; to buy, sell and import liquor; to control the possession and consumption of liquor; to determine the municipalities where stores would be established; to grant, refuse, or cancel permits for the purchase of liquor; to lease, furnish and equip any building required; to appoint vendors, officers, inspectors and clerks and fix their salaries, titles and duties; to control liquor packaging and to grant and issue licenses; to set the hours of sale, prices of liquor, the conditions of granting licenses; and to conduct the management of any premises licensed to sell beer.

When compared with other provincial Liquor Control Acts, Alberta's new Act was more restrictive in some areas, and was certainly developed to increase the government's revenues. In Quebec, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, an individual was not required to purchase a permit; in British Columbia one permit at $.25 for a year covered the purchase of all liquors. Manitoba required a $1.00 permit.[109] While Alberta had made a concession to the pressure and influence of the provincial breweries by allowing the sale of beer by the glass, the Quebec system allowed for the sale of food in taverns, and the sale of beer in restaurants, reflecting a different attitude to the place of alcohol in society which was based on a different cultural background. One of the strongest criticisms of Alberta's system was that the sale of liquor was still surrounded with too many restrictions which were considered to be "unnecessary, absurd and impossible to enforce."[110]

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[109] Raymond B. Fosdick and Albert L. Scott, Toward Liquor Control (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1933), p. 112.

[110] Edmonton Bulletin, April 5, 1924.

Many people were aware that the use of liquor was still invested with Anglo-Saxon, Protestant moral values:

> ...while declaring the sale of beer and wine and liquor to be legal, the bill brands both seller of beer and the user of liquor as doing something that is either morally wrong or publicly dangerous or both.[111]

One critic of the U.F.A. government's actions stated:

> Their position is that the public asked for something it should not have asked for, that an Act has to be passed which will have the appearance of complying with that demand: but that the statute should be studded with all conceivable restrictions to keep the misguided majority from drinking themselves to death.[112]

While the Bulletin's criticism has some truth to it, the editor, Frank Oliver, bitter that prohibition had been defeated decided to take the opposite stand in order to attack the U.F.A. Furthermore he mis-read the temper of the population, for few people, after a period of prohibition, would have been pleased with a new liquor act which would have allowed wide-open "boozing". In addition 61,780 votes for continued prohibition was a fair number of the voting public, who had to be acknowledged if the U.F.A. wanted to stay in power in future provincial elections. The U.F.A. had managed a fairly equitable compromise among all parties involved in question, and while the extremists on either side were not content, the middle course pleased most Albertans.

With the provisions of the Act established, the U.F.A. prepared

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[111] Edmonton Bulletin, April 5, 1924.

[112] Ibid.

itself for its entrance into the liquor business. Building and storage space for the Board's facilities had to be obtained and personnel hired. Property at reasonable prices was difficult to obtain in the downtown areas of Edmonton and Calgary, however, the Board was able to obtain space in the Marshall Wells Warehouse in Edmonton, and from the Hudson's Bay Company in Calgary. By the end of 1924, the Board had approximately 50 employees.

Although the new law was to go into effect at noon on Saturday, May 10, 1924, and people had lined up at the government stores, they had to be turned away because the operation of the Liquor Act had been postponed because of insufficient stocks of liquor.[113] However, Monday, May 13, was the first "Wet Day" across the province, breaking the eight year drought on the legal purchase of liquor for beverage purposes. There was a continuous stream of people all day at the liquor store in Edmonton; mostly men, but also some women, purchasing mainly gin and whiskey.[114] Those unfortunate enough to live in towns still went dry as there had not been sufficient time to open up additional stores. On May 26, the first liquor license for a picnic was issued to the Great War Veterans Association for an outing at Fort Saskatchewan.[115] The Palliser Hotel in Calgary obtained the first hotel license, and soon other major hotels obtained their licenses too. The Board also

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[113] Edmonton Bulletin, May 11, 1924.

[114] Ibid., May 13, 1924.

[115] Ibid.

licensed the five Alberta breweries to supply the province's beer.[116] Government liquor control and the consumption of liquor in Alberta was once again under way in Alberta.

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[116]"Fifty Years", A.L.C.B., 1974.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL 1924-1929

Revenue and Interest Groups

The institution of government control of alcohol distribution and sales in Alberta did not mark the end of the battle between the opposing forces, nor did it present fewer problems for the U.F.A. government.[1] The revenues brought in by the sale of liquor improved Alberta's financial position, but quarrels between the province and municipalities over the allocation of funds resulted. The government also found itself under considerable pressure from the Alberta Prohibition Association and perennial critics of the liquor question, such as Nellie McClung, to tighten up the provisions of the new act and to allow another vote on the prohibition issue.

The major controversy centered about liquor profits. The U.F.A. was in a very restricted financial position, because not only were they still trying to pay off the provincial debt incurred by the Liberal government, but they themselves had been presenting deficit budgets since 1921. In addition, the U.F.A. was responsible for establishing social reform programs in the areas of health, education, and Mothers' Allowances, all of which had to be financed from government revenues. Prohibition supporters were opposed to any definite allocation of liquor profits for they felt that would lead to competition for the revenues and a possible increase in alcohol consumption.[2] Once again the U.F.A. was forced to find a solution which presented

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[1] "Five Years of Progress", 1926, U.F.A. Pamphlets and Circulars, Glenbow, Calgary.

[2] H.H. Hull to H. Greenfield, March 21, 1925, Premiers Papers, Alberta Provincial Archives.

a compromise and which would benefit the government.

It is therefore understandable that the government took such a strong stand on the allocation of the liquor sales revenues. In March of 1924, after the Liquor Control Act had been passed for the Second Reading, two clauses were eliminated from the bill.[3] The second of the clauses dealt with the division of profits with the municipalities. At that time Brownlee stated that the government wished to give a more careful consideration to the whole question and that as it was not possible for the government to participate immediately in a sharing of revenues, the clause would be left out for 1924.[4] No reason was given as to why the government could not participate, however one can assume that the U.F.A. wanted to make complete use of the revenues themselves. The clause dealing with the disposition of profits, Clause 144, had contained provision for a division of the profits with the municipalities on a 65-35% basis. After lengthy debate in the Legislature, it was agreed that the distribution of liquor profits should be left for adjustment by Order-in-Council. Therefore Clause 144 provided that profits less reserve would be paid into the general reserves and appropriated to the public service of the province.[5] Greenfield also explained that further examination of the problem would take place and added that

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[3]The first clause dealt with making a man a compellable witness against himself. Edmonton Journal, March 8, 1924.

[4]Edmonton Journal, March 8, 1924.

[5]Ibid.

"...it might be decided that the province retain the profits and give the cities and towns some equivalent adjustment of other taxes."[6]

However the municipalities were not content with this state of affairs as they desired the actual revenue and felt that the new provisions constituted a breach of an agreement between the government and the municipalities.[7] J.W. Heffernan, M.L.A., questioned the government's action on that basis, but Greenfield stated that there had not been a written agreement, and that only his word had been given to the municipalities and that he would endeavour to keep that word.[8]

Those who hoped to see liquor profits shared by the province and the cities in 1925 were to be disappointed. Greenfield explained his government's position: "We were disappointed in some large item of revenue in 1924 and cannot yet point to a balanced budget."[9] The provincial budget showed an estimated deficit of $368,000 and Greenfield could find no sound reason for increasing that deficit by handing over some of the liquor profits to the municipalities.[10] The U.F.A. government reflected the typical conservative attitude towards financial policy in practice at that time. They sought to balance the budget at all costs and avoid anything connected with deficit spending.

On January 6, 1925, Brownlee issued a statement which was an

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[6] Edmonton Journal, March 8, 1924.

[7] Albertan, March 8, 1924.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Lethbridge Herald, March 18, 1925. [10] Ibid.

attempt to placate the municipalities by reintroducing a practice which had been in effect under the old liquor act but omitted in an "oversight" in the new act. He announced that the provincial government had decided to turn over the fines collected by Branches of the Liquor Control Board since May 1924, to the cities and municipalities employing their own police force. Cases brought before the local police were the only ones affected. At that time the estimated benefit to Calgary and Edmonton would be between $5,000 and $6,000.[11] The government's decision was approved by the Alberta Prohibition Association,[12] however the newspapers and the municipalities were unimpressed by the move. The Bulletin felt that at least the government was undoing a wrong for which there had been no good reason and stated that

> ...if there is any notion that this concession will be accepted by councils or taxpayers as 'evening up' matters in respect to the huge profits the Province is getting, that idea should be dismissed.[13]

While the government defended its actions by pointing to the objections of rural municipalities to any policy of distributing liquor profits, the fact that additional taxation would become necessary to make up for the lost revenues, and the necessity of using the revenues for improving conditions in the Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District as well as several other drainage districts, there was widespread discontent throughout the province.

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[11] Edmonton Bulletin, January 6, 1925.

[12] H.H. Hull to H. Greenfield, March 21, 1925, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[13] Edmonton Bulletin, January 9, 1925.

The Calgary Herald, reflecting the anger remarked, "Here is the promise of March 7, 1924 which was publicly made, publicly broken at the session in 1925..."[14]

Protests continued through 1925 and in January of 1926 a delegation of the Alberta Union of Urban Municipalities sought an interview with Premier Brownlee about the liquor profits. Once again they were informed that profit sharing would be impossible for 1926 and the situation would not be changed until provincial finances were in a better condition.[15]

By 1926 the U.F.A. was able to present its first balanced budget[16] and they continued to do so until the end of the decade. With the total support of the Alberta Prohibition Association,[17] the government still refused to allocate any portion of the liquor revenues to the municipalities, preferring instead to grant money from the general provincial tax revenues. The great increase in provincial revenues gave the government the money to increase their expenditures on such social improvements as the Mother's Allowance and the Children's Protection Act.[18] The U.F.A. obviously felt that they would be better able to improve social conditions in Alberta by keeping control of the

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[14] Calgary Herald, March 18, 1925.

[15] Edmonton Journal, January 27, 1926.

[16] U.F.A., March 15, 1926.

[17] Alberta Prohibition Association to J.E. Brownlee, February 19, 1929, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[18] U.F.A., February 15, 1929.

increased monies themselves, allocating them to province-wide programs rather than local municipal needs.

Between 1924 and 1929 it became apparent to the U.F.A. and many Albertans that the promises of government control were as unfulfilled as the promises of prohibition had been. People's attitude to the idea of any amount of control placed on their liquor consumption; the continuance of basic social and personal problems; and the contradictory terms of the new Liquor Act, contributed to the problems of bootlegging, increased alcohol consumption and the general difficulties of administration.

One of the Moderation League's most persuasive arguments, that government control would eliminate all bootlegging, was soon proved to be the contrary. Part of the reason for this failure to eliminate bootlegging rested on the very nature of the Liquor Control Act. The government found itself still in conflict between dominion and provincial authority. Under the new act, the Liquor Control Board could only seize moonshine, but not the still nor the mash; nor could they destroy the still. Only the Federal Inland Revenue Officers had that right and Commissioner Dinning often found it necessary to criticize the Federal Officers for their lack of cooperation and initiative.[19] He was also of the opinion that the R.C.M.P. did not cooperate enough with the A.P.P. to effect arrests of people carrying on bootlegging. The situation had even warranted a trip by Brownlee to Ottawa to request that six preventative excise officials be given the power to seize the stills. The Dominion government denied the request but two years

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[19] "Fifty Years", Alberta Liquor Control Board, 1974.

later six A.P.P. men were invested with that power.[20]

To add to the attractiveness of the bootleg liquor, the Liquor Control Board had set a very high price list for hard liquors. When the first price list was issued on May 9, 1924, the newspapers greeted it with scorn, calling it scandalous.[21] It had been hoped that prices would be set close the wholesale value at which liquor had been sold to the druggists for dispensing by prescription. The average price range per 12 ounce bottle for rum was $7.75 to $3.50, for Rye Whiskey, $4.75 to $3.50; for Scotch, $5.25 to $4.50; and for Brandy, $4.50 to $2.50.[22] Obviously the government hoped that such high prices would discourage people from consuming hard liquor. In part the U.F.A. was following upon the Moderation League's Clause D, which had stressed beer as a less harmful alcoholic drink.

In addition, just as prohibition, a manifestation of middle class values, had allowed those people of sufficient means to import liquor, while the less wealthy had to resort to bootleg liquor, government control also allowed only the wealthier to purchase their liquor legally from the government stores. For the rest of the drinking public, the bootlegger and moonshine still continued to provide the only practical alternative; an alternative which was often harmful. The Liquor Board, in its analysis of all illicit liquor it had seized, found that 40% of

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[20] Albertan, February 1, 1927.

[21] Edmonton Bulletin, May 10, 1924.

[22] "Fifty Years", Alberta Liquor Control Board, 1974.

that liquor was unfit for human consumption.[23] The moonshine stored in the Board's Marshall Wells storage building often interrupted normal office routine with the occasional eruption of over-active mix, attesting to the potency of the liquor.[24] The Albertan felt that it was not surprising that honorable citizens dealt with bootleggers when

> ...the governments of Alberta and British Columbia continue to pile up such enormous annual profits out of the trade of charging prices that are not justifiable and by adding a petty graft in the form of annual permits...[25]

Prices continued high as the province's prosperity improved in the late 1920's, but with the advent of the depression, hard liquor was too expensive for most of the population.

Another problem contributing to the success of the still and the bootlegger was the insufficient number of liquor stores in the provinces, particularly in the rural areas. As a remedy to the situation, the Alberta Hotel Association, under the leadership of Daniel Whitney and Charles Traunweiser, became the leader in applying pressure on the U.F.A. to allow sales of beer for off-premise consumption. They declared that it was not their association who had originated the request, but rather it was the constant demand on the part of the public.[26] To counter statements from the Attorney-General's department that all

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[23] Albertan, February 1, 1927.

[24] "Fifty Years," Alberta Liquor Control Board, 1974.

[25] Albertan, February 9, 1927.

[26] Daniel Whitney to H. Greenfield, March 14, 1925, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

government restrictions and supervision of beer sales would be lifted if the hotelmen had the right to sell beer for off-premises consumption,[27] they suggested that beer would only be sold to permit holders.[28] The hotelmen pointed to the plight of the farmers, who, because of the lack of vendors in rural Alberta, and the seven to ten day wait for express orders, could not "...take a few bottles of beer home to their wives...or fill...a request from a sick mother."[29] Moreover, the law was unfair because it allowed a case of beer to be sent to a hotel room, but did not allow the hotel the right to sell beer to the guests who would then take the beer up to their rooms. The hotelmen were obviously intent upon making double the profits if they could.

In early March of 1925 the Hotel Association presented a petition to the legislature and an amendment was drawn up allowing the sale of beer for off-premises consumption. The bill was presented March 23, with Mrs. Parlby and Attorney-General Brownlee expressing their opposition to any measure which would loosen up the liquor act.[30] Brownlee also questioned the supposed widespread nature of the demands, pointing to the Prohibitionists' total opposition to any such measure and the Moderationists' refusal to join.[31] For most members, the idea of purchasing beer from a hotel to be consumed outside of the bar was

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[27] Edmonton Journal, March 10, 1925.

[28] Whitney to Greenfield, March 14, 1925, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[29] J.A. Weicker to H. Greenfield, March 5, 1925, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[30] Edmonton Bulletin, March 24, 1925.

[31] Ibid.

too advanced and could only lead to further abuses, therefore the amendment was defeated by a vote of 34 to 17.[32] Although the complaints continued and home-made brew became increasingly popular, it was not until 1934 that the sale of beer for off-premises consumption was allowed.

The distribution and sale of beer by the provincial breweries were subject to problems and the adoption of more regulations and increased cooperation between breweries became necessary. After 1924, the companies had operated on an open-market basis, selling directly to the licensees and permit holders. There were brewery agents working on a commission basis in almost every town. Volume sales were of such great importance that there was often active competition between agents. As hotelmen began demanding credit to continue their purchases of beer, the brewers found that they could not afford to refuse a license for credit, because the hotel would switch brewers.[33] By 1928 the problem became so severe that the brewers met in May and decided upon the first beer quota, agreeing to divide the beer market evenly among themselves. The Liquor Board approved and left the enforcement of the quota to the brewers.[34]

When three breweries, the North West Brewing Company, the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company and Lethbridge Breweries were fined $1,000 each in 1927 for infractions of the liquor act, Commissioner Dinning

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[32] Edmonton Bulletin, March 25, 1925.

[33] "Fifty Years", Alberta Liquor Control Board, 1974.

[34] Edmonton Bulletin, May 22, 1928.

decided to make a survey of the system of distribution of bottled beer. Since 1924 there had been more than 20 convictions of warehouse managers and brewers and the Liquor Board had often found it necessary to protest the calibre of men the breweries employed.[35] Dinning, in his report to Attorney-General Lymburn summarized the situation:

> Too much duplication of distributing facilities; payment of agents on the basis of 15% of the value of the liquor sold; lack of supervision by the brewers of their warehouses; the indifference of the warehouse managers to the requirements of the act; and the competition and rivalry between the brewers leading to the forcing of sales.[36]

Dinning recommended that the province close the 60 warehouses, open 5 or 6 vendor's stores and withdraw the privilege of beer sales from the warehouses, taking over the entire distribution of bottled beer. If such a measure were accepted the government would have to make provisions for delivering the beer to the purchasers in the large centers, increase their storage facilities and place a man in charge of each brewery to keep a detailed check of the beer bottled and delivered to the Board. Naturally the brewers were unhappy at the prospect of losing control of their business, the economy minded U.F.A. government was reluctant to expand its responsibilities in controlling the beer companies, and the general public were angered that they would lose their remaining source of beer, the warehouses, in rural districts where there were no government stores.[37] Dinning's complaints received

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[35] R.J. Dinning to J. Lymburn, November 30, 1927, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives. The breweries were convicted for allowing excessive sales of beer to permit holders who were selling the beer either in Montana or as bootleg beer in Alberta.

[36] Ibid. [37] Ibid.

little direct action until August 1, 1928, when the brewers founded the corporation "Distributors Limited", which reduced the price of beer $1.00 per barrel by the end of the year but otherwise did little to correct the duplication of services.[38]

The breweries also came under attack for shipping liquor to Montana where prohibition was in effect. Dinning had records for large sales of liquor to individual permit holders and he was sure that the North West Brewing Company and the Lethbridge Breweries were shipping over the border.[39] In September of 1929, representatives of the brewers under the leadership of M.H. Lister, General Manager of Distributors Limited, met with Brownlee and Dinning and after conferring with other members, A.E. Cross and Mr. Emil Sick, Lister informed the government that the brewers would cooperate fully with the government to stop beer running to Montana.[40] Telegrams were sent to Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Macleod and Blairmore warehouse managers telling them to refuse to fill an order on an individual permit if they suspected that the goods would be going to the United States. By October 1929, Dinning was able to report that only the "odd bottle was smuggled through" and that Montana bootleggers were having to travel 200 miles into British Columbia to get their supplies. While conditions probably did not improve quite so dramatically, certainly not until after prohibition was repealed

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[38] "Fifty Years," Alberta Liquor Control Board, 1974.

[39] R.J. Dinning to J. Lymburn, March 11, 1927.

[40] M.H. Lester to R.J. Dinning, September 28, 1929, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

in the United States in 1933, the brewers did realize that it was in their best interests to appear to be upholding the laws.

Law enforcement was not easier under government control, nor was there any increased respect for the law as the Moderationists had claimed there would be. The A.P.P. was still seen as an ineffective law enforcement organization.[42] Proving liquor infractions was still difficult and cases were often quashed for lack of evidence. Friction continued between the A.P.P., the R.C.M.P. and dominion officials and the Liquor Control Board added to the problem by establishing its own plainclothes enforcement branch in 1924, equipped with official badge and hand gun and under the supervision of the A.P.P. Commissioner. This particular law enforcement group was perhaps subjected to more ridicule and contempt than any other agency. There were instances of supposed open drinking of bottles in the street, but when the Liquor Board men would arrest the suspect, the bottle would be found to contain cold tea or some other non-alcoholic substance.[43] In 1932, when the A.P.P. and consequently the Liquor Board force were disbanded, the R.C.M.P. took over all responsibility for enforcing the liquor act, except in municipal areas. The change seemed to please most people as it relieved much of the ill-will between the citizens of the province and the board, whom they felt had no right to be involved in law enforcement activities.[44]

For the Prohibitionists the evils of the liquor trade began as

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[42] Albertan, February 12, 1927.

[43] Calgary Herald, July 12, 1927.

[44] "Fifty Years", Alberta Liquor Control Board, 1974.

soon as the government stores opened and beer could be bought by glass in the hotels. In 1925 H.H. Hull, of the Prohibition Association, undertook a tour of the province to see how the new act was working. In small towns he was told that the sit-down bar was worse than the old stand-up bar as it encouraged loafing and drunkenness.[45] In Edmonton and Calgary increasing drunkenness was noted but arrests were not being made.[46] Money was wasted, there were more car accidents and merchants were doing less business. Beer drinking was contributing to great increases in drunkenness, as in 1925 67% of the 375 interdictions had no permit from the liquor stores to be cancelled, so they had obtained their liquor from the hotels.[47] Bottleggers also had the opportunity under the new act to obtain their supplies through legal channels; an Edmonton bootlegger was convicted of obtaining 356 permits in eleven months; another was convicted for having purchased $553 worth of liquor in forty days from two different vendors.[48]

It was obvious to the Prohibitionists that the beer parlors had to be closed and all sales be confined to the vendor stores.[49]

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[45] H.H. Hull to H. Greenfield, September 28, 1925.

[46] "Alberta's Government Control Myth," Alberta Prohibition Association, March 11, 1927, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[47] Alberta Prohibition Association, to J. Brownlee, September 17, 1926, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives. Interdiction meant that a man could be declared a drunk, his name would be placed on an interdiction list in the liquor stores and he would not be able to purchase liquor.

[48] "Alberta's Government Control Myth," Alberta Prohibition Association, March 11, 1927, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives. The bootleggers would obtain temporary permits, which meant that each purchase would not be recorded, allowing the bootlegger to return many times to purchase liquor supplies.

[49] H.H. Hull to H. Greenfield, September 28, 1925, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

Accordingly the provincial Prohibition Association and the W.C.T.U. kept up a continued presure on the government to eliminate the sale of beer in hotels and through brewery warehouses. In the legislature Nellie McClung headed the fight against any further concessions to the liquor interests and the beer parlors.

On April 2, 1925 she introduced an amendment to prohibit beer licenses to picnics on the grounds that drinking should not take place in front of women and children.[50] She obviously ignored the fact that liquor could be purchased to be consumed in the house in front of women and children and that the stigma of public drunkenness in front of friends and neighbors might control drunkenness. Nevertheless, the amendment was passed. But it was in March of 1926 that McClung introduced a resolution that:

> ...a separate ballot should be submitted at the coming general election, on which the electors may express their desire for the continuance or elimination of the beer halls.[51]

She contended that the people had not understood the nature of Clause D, and that the government should accept the responsibility and rectify the situation. Brownlee did not agree that "hundreds of thousands of people did not know what they were voting for."[52] The U.F.A. had tried to be fair to both groups as the hotelmen's petition of 1925 had received consideration from the government, but Brownlee would take no action unless a petition came from the people under the terms of the Direct Legislation Act. Brownlee felt that if the government acceded

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[50] Edmonton Bulletin, April 3, 1925.

[51] U.F.A., April 1, 1926. [52] Ibid.

to the requests of the Prohibitionists, the province might find itself faced with a liquor vote every election.[53] The liquor question must be kept out of politics and elections. Most of the members of the legislature agreed with Brownlee, as the motion was defeated 43-8.

Although the prohibitionists pointed out the flaws in the government control system, they had a few suggestions other than prohibition as to how to bring about a change in drinking habits or to the social and personal problems which led to excessive drinking. They fell back upon scientific temperance education, distributing a Canadian textbook written by an Australian Temperance Worker, Isabel McCorkindale. The book, Temperance and Life, contained twelve lessons and charts, supplying a lesson once a month for a year. Such a method had little wide popular appeal for temperance was taught in Sunday schools where it would only reach an audience already disposed to follow a certain degree of temperance. The U.F.W.A. attempted to have compulsory teaching of the effects of alcohol in the schools but there was little general acceptance of the idea.[54] Prohibitionists could only think in terms of strict regulations and rules to bring about a change in people.

Those still inclined towards prohibition could make use of the local option clause. Between 1925 and 1929, 43 rural communities held local option votes, 16 voting "wet" and 27 voting "dry".[55] Rural areas were still against open bars selling beer by the glass.

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[53] U.F.A., April 1, 1926.

[54] Ibid., January 3, 1927.

[55] Statistics on Liquor Plebiscites, 1925-29, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

While government control was seen as a failure by the prohibitionists, the Moderation League hailed the system as a success.[56] They staunchly defended the liquor act often stating that it had not had enough time to have a fair trial.[57] Only "narrow-minded, impractical persons" tried to discredit the act.[58] More people did come to agree that control by the government seemed to be the best solution. Even Emily Murphy, Edmonton Police Court Magistrate and one time proponent of prohibition in 1926 declared that government control worked in Alberta because of a "well conceived and well-enforced law" which through the interdiction system and the high prices had reduced convictions and bootlegging.[59]

The controversy continued between supporters of prohibition and government control and it is extremely difficult to judge who exaggerated the conditions. Both sides used the statistics on convictions for their own purposes. Perhaps the safest assumption to make is that abuses did continue, but the majority of people were content with the system.

Although there was general confidence in the U.F.A.'s handling of the liquor question as the decade passed,[60] the government still

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[56] C.F.P. Conybeare to H. Greenfield, March 19, 1925, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[57] Resolution of Moderation League to H. Greenfield, January 10, 1929, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[58] C.F.P. Conybeare to H. Greenfield, March 19, 1925, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[59] U.F.A., April 15, 1926.

[60] Ibid., February 22, 1929.

continued to receive criticism of its earlier actions. Many people had difficulty in reconciling the differences between the prohibition supporting U.F.A. and U.F.W.A. locals and the pragmatic U.F.A. government. By 1929 the U.F.A., U.F.W.A., W.C.T.U. and Alberta Prohibition Association had united in their efforts to abolish beer parlors and club and canteen licenses. The U.F.W.A. had passed a resolution which was also accepted in the U.F.A. convention to abolish the beer parlors because of the "...menace to the morals, happiness and standard of living of the rural people of this province."[61]

Mr. Duggan, the Conservative party leader, quoted U.F.A. and U.F.W.A. platforms and resolutions arguing that the time had come to make some change in present system; a change which would give the government absolute control and eventually abolish the entire trade.[62] The Liberal leader, J.T. Shaw accused the government of increasing the consumption of liquor to "balance the budget from year to year."[63] Brownlee denied the charge pointing to the lack of ads and promotion of sales, and the higher prices. Although the government was able to take advantage of the increased sales, it was the general public who was responsible for increasing their consumption of alcohol. The govern- could only react to the people's demands.

While the Prohibition Association might be of the opinion that conditions prior to 1923 had been better[64] Brownlee argued that in 1923

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[61] U.F.A., February 22, 1929.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Alberta Prohibition Association Resolution to J.E. Brownlee, February 19, 1929, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives.

[64] U.F.A., March 8, 1929.

there had been "a change of attitude in the province," and that his government had recognized it and dealt with it to the best of their ability.[65] Although he did believe that a reaction was beginning which in two or three years would lead to a general public opinion in favor of greater restrictions in the liquor trade, if not a return to prohibition, he was content to allow public opinion to take whatever course it would choose, as he was well aware of the danger of trying to act in anticipation of such a change.[66] The U.F.A. government had become exponents of practical, constructive reform, rather than "short cuts to social reform." Social adjustment could be effected gradually by "systematic construction under the broad guidance of well-defined natural laws."[67] These new concepts of reform were based on the understanding that:

> Laws, rules and regulations can play a significant part in bringing about social change if the gap between the law and prevailing attitudes and customs is not too great, that is if there already is a tendency to move in the direction required by the legal and regulatory system.[68]

While a vocal minority on both sides clamored for greater change, most of Alberta's population and the U.F.A. government were content to follow a fairly moderate course.

The institution of government control can be regarded as successful, especially in the light of its purpose. Government control was to

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[65] U.F.A., March 8, 1929.

[66] Ibid., February 25, 1926.

[67] Thomas Plant, Alcohol Problems, A Report to the Nation by the Cooperative Commission on the Study of Alcoholism, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 133.

[68] U.F.A., April 1, 1927

provide beer, wine and hard liquor to the people under the impartial control and regulation of the government, rather than a competitive system run by brewers, exporters and bartenders. Even under government control the breweries maintained a freedom based largely on their economic strength and the influence of their higher officials. Evidence of their position can be seen in the fact that Alberta allowed beer to be sold by the glass immediately after the 1923 referendum, while Manitoba and Saskatchewan only allowed beer by the glass sales several years after the initial referendum and only after great pressure from the brewers and hotel-keepers. While the government exercised more control of hard liquor consumption, the pricing was so severe, that bootlegging and stills remained a lucrative business. The evils of pre-prohibition days returned; the drinking away of workers' pay-checks, complaints of labor inefficiency; the suffering of families and increased drunkenness. Government control made no attempt to re-educate the drinking public to place alcohol into a greater family and social context. Instead liquor was still regarded as an evil, and drinking was an unsavory pastime to be allowed only in the most restricted framework. To that end no food was served in bars, men and women were separated and certainly no singing or dancing could be allowed. Temperance education was left largely in the hands of the interested protestant churches and the Prohibition Association, whose ideas had changed little from the days of the Social Service Council. The U.F.A., standing aloof from real commitment to any "radical" cause, administered the act and collected the much needed revenues.

Carl Betke has demonstrated that the farm organization of the U.F.A., and the U.F.A. government often operated separately from each other. The U.F.A. locals were often in the shadow of the government,[69] while the government, particularly under Brownlee's leadership provided competent, businesslike administration.[70] The government dealt with traditional provincial issues, such as railways, health care, and education, making careful decisions based on sound business principles.[71] Betke has pointed out that until 1925[72] the U.F.A. locals deluged the government with resolutions on all topics, from remedies for the economic depression of the early years of the decade to calls for investigation into the freight rate structure.[73]

Although Betke did not include the issue of prohibition and government control in his discussion, it can be seen that the whole problem of prohibition further illustrates the separation between the U.F.A. farm organization and the government. Prohibition was an issue on which the U.F.A. locals felt that they had the right to expect their government to effect immediate remedies and uphold the cause. While the U.F.A. government tended to support the farm organization's resolutions when they coincided with the government's objectives, the government could take a firm stand in opposition to the locals. The

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[69] Carl Betke, "The U.F.A. 1921-1933: The Relationship Between the Agricultural Organization and the Government of Alberta." M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1971, p. 167.

[70] Ibid., p. 82.

[71] Ibid., p. 167.

[72] Ibid., p. 81.

[73] Ibid., p. 50.

two groups agreed on the necessity of an Old Age Pension,[74] a Minimum Wage Act, an innoculation program, the establishment of a home for delinquent boys and an increase in municipal hospital services.[75] However, on the issue of prohibition, the government was not moved by U.F.A. resolutions to ban beer parlors and reinstitute prohibition,[76] taking the view that "any law must find its sanction in the will of the people."[77] Until the general attitude of the people changed Brownlee and the U.F.A. government felt that the local option vote could be used to eliminate beer parlors.[78] Both the financial realities of the 1920s and the government's belief in following the will of the majority, led the U.F.A. government to conduct the system of government control of the liquor business and ignore the pleas of the U.F.A. locals as well as other prohibition groups.

In many ways little had changed from the pre-prohibition and prohibition eras. Liquor was still a social and economic problem, those who wished to drink found ways of doing so, and the government remained in a difficult position subject to pressures to reform the morals of the province, present a healthy budget, and give the people what they wanted. By 1923 a majority of people wanted liquor again. Under the influence of Moderation League doctrines, they thought that if the government seemed to play a greater role in controlling the sale of liquor, somehow the evils of the pre-1915 period could be

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[74] U.F.A., January 2, 1929.

[75] Ibid., February 25, 1926.

[76] Ibid., February 22, 1929.

[77] Ibid., March 8, 1929. [78] Ibid.

avoided. Neither prohibition nor government control were perfect solutions.

Any effort by government to deal with morality or social habits will never find total acceptance. The U.F.A., acting in a very similar fashion to the other prairie governments of the 1920s bowed to the winds of change both for its own political good and as a reflection of the prosperous, leisure seeking public of the later 1920s. Restrictions and prohibitions on alcohol, after a time of wartime restriction which had in the end gained little for the Canadian people, were highly unpopular.

What is surprising is how one of the staunchest supporters of prohibition after 1921 succumbed to pressure itself and passed more liberal drinking laws than the other prairie provinces. The U.F.A. government's difficulty in formulating a definite policy on the liquor question rested in part on its origins as a pressure movement and its attempts to conciliate all interests. The U.F.A. was no less successful in implementing government control than other provincial governments and perhaps its actions can be justified through the public works, health and social programs and the farmers' cooperative pools they were able to establish after 1924. Despite renewed interest in prohibition between 1933 and 1935, government control of alcoholic beverages was firmly established in Alberta.

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APPENDIX

STATISTICAL TABLES

Table 1a

Convictions for Drunkenness, (male and female). Convictions under Liquor Control Acts, Convictions for All Offenses in Alberta

	Convictions for Drunkenness			Convictions under Liquor Control Act	Convictions for all Offenses
	males	females	total		
1910	3,496	47	3,543	396	9,515
1911	4,001	40	4,041	423	10,269
1912	6,620	37	6,657	605	16,775
1913	7,223	60	7,283	560	19,426
1914	5,620	90	5,710	551	19,043
1915	2,752	50	2,802	573	14,419
1916	1,748	61	1,809	713	11,426
1917	372	19	391	885	6,627
1918	796	29	825	678	7,633
1919	1,015	42	1,057	436	7,001
1920	1,486	50	1,536	618	8,459
1921	1,776	62	1,838	907	9,847
1922	1,535	73	1,608	1,403	8,937
1923	1,223	54	1,277	990	9,782
1924	1,427	37	1,464	817	9,765
1925	1,321	53	1,374	758	9,094
1926	1,365	48	1,413	737	9,605
1927	1,138	44	1,182	814	10,284
1928	1,462	76	1,538	944	12,628
1929	1,731	79	1,810	1,017	16,140
1930	1,508	43	1,551	970	15,429
1931	1,140	51	1,191	888	16,000
1932	864	44	908	557	10,421
1933	561	28	589	410	12,242

Source:

Robert E. Popham, Wolfgang Schmidt, Statistics of Alcohol Use and Alcoholism in Canada 1871-1956, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 51.

Table 1b

Convictions for Drunkenness, Convictions for Offenses under the Liquor Acts, and Convictions for All Types of Offenses per 100,000 Population Aged 15 and older in Alberta

	Rate of Convictions for Drunkenness	Rate of Convictions for Offenses under Liquor Acts	Rate of Convictions for All Offenses
1910	1,575	176	4,229
1911	1,597	167	4,059
1912	2,475	225	6,236
1913	2,538	195	6,769
1914	1,872	181	6,244
1915	884	181	4,549
1916	555	219	3,505
1917	118	267	1,996
1918	243	200	2,252
1919	303	125	2,006
1920	423	170	2,330
1921	490	242	2,626
1922	427	277	2,371
1923	337	261	2,581
1924	383	214	2,556
1925	355	196	2,350
1926	360	188	2,450
1927	288	198	2,502
1928	356	219	2,923
1929	399	224	3,556
1930	327	205	3,255
1931	242	180	3,245
1932	182	111	2,084
1933	115	80	2,400

Source:

Robert E. Popham, Wolfgang Schmidt, Statistics of Alcohol Use and Alcoholism in Canada 1871-1956, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 68.

Table 2

Convictions for Drunken Driving, Number of Registered Motor Vehicles and Drunken Driving Convictions per 100,000 Registered Vehicles in Alberta

	Convictions for Drunken Driving	Number of Motor Vehicles	Convictions per 100,000 Vehicles
1924	25	48,238	52
1925	42	54,538	77
1926	54	65,101	83
1927	25	73,306	34
1928	76	88,398	86
1929	94	98,720	95
1930	95	101,114	94
1931	46	94,642	49
1932	24	86,781	28
1933	19	86,041	22

Source:

Robert E. Popham, Wolfgang Schmidt, Statistics of Alcohol Use and Alcoholism in Canada 1871-1956, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 75.

Table 3

Convictions for Keeping or Operating an Illicit Still, Alberta 1920-29

1920	52
1921	12
1922	46
1923	132
1924	83
1925	54
1926	49
1927	18
1928	29
1929	37

Source:

Robert E. Popham, Wolfgang Schmidt, Statistics of Alcohol Use and Alcoholism in Canada 1871-1956, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 71.

Table 4

Apparent Consumption of Beer, Wine and Spirits and Total Alcohol Consumption Per Capita of 15 years and over in Alberta

	Beer*	Wine*	Spirits*	Total*	Total Per Capita
1928	228.3	27.5	86.3	342.1	.79
1929	220.0	35.2	87.2	342.4	.75
1930	213.9	32.5	85.3	331.7	.70
1931	177.1	26.1	64.5	267.7	.54

Source:

Robert E. Popham, Wolfgang Schmidt, Statistics of Alcohol Use and Alcoholism in Canada 1871-1956, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 21. *In thousands of Imperial gallons of absolute alcohol.

Table 5a

Gross Sales of All Liquor and Net Provincial Revenue in Alberta 1924-1931

	Gross Sales	Net Revenue
1924 (7 months)	2,632,605	1,127,536
1925	3,734,111	1,672,732
1926	4,268,586	1,936,290
1927	4,858,849	2,187,740
1928 (3 months)	1,256,354	602,546
1929	6,551,523	2,850,007
1930	6,283,507	2,598,932
1931	4,678,109	2,019,400

Source:

E.B. Ross, Government Sale of Liquor in Canada: Ten Years Experience, (Seattle: Lex Publishing Co., 1932), p. 60.

Table 5b

Total Provincial Revenues and Expenditures
in Alberta 1921-1931

	Revenues	Expenditures
1921	$ 11,086,937	$ 13,109,301
1922	9,324,889	11,235,192
1923	10,419,146	10,990,830
1924	10,506,627	11,174,690
1925	11,531,026	11,249,433
1926	11,912,128	11,894,328
1927	12,263,401	12,479,381
1928	16,149,896 (15 months)	15,870,135 (15 months)
1929	15,265,084	13,686,261
1930	15,829,865	15,402,885
1931	15,710,962	18,017,544

Source:

Canadian Annual Review, 1921-31.

Table 6

Constituency Vote for 1923 Referendum. Constituencies with Majority Vote for Clause A (Prohibition)

	Clause A	Clause D
Alexandra	845	659
Camrose	2,104	1,327
Cardston	1,521	352
Coronation	1,329	1,075
Claresholm	742	612
High River	753	738
Innisfail	919	693
Lacombe	1,623	965
Little Bow	867	742
Olds	1,135	783
Ponoka	982	665
Red Deer	1,647	1,170
Ribstone	1,196	849
Sedgewick	1,272	1,204
Stettler	1,430	1,429
Taber	1,618	1,521
Wetaskiwin	1,040	946

Constituencies with Majority Vote for Clause D (Government Control)

Acadia	1,250	1,284
Athabasca	145	646
Beaver River	116	1,596
Bow Valley	408	1,311
Calgary	8,843	16,897
Cardston	1,521	352
Clearwater	66	203
Cochrane	424	510
Didsbury	1,821	2,144
Edmonton	10,297	14,041
Edson	410	2,262
Gleichen	733	1,392

Table 6 (continued)

	Clause A	Clause D
Grouard	133	1,115
Hand Hills	1,126	1,908
Lac St. Anne	411	1,399
Leduc	660	1,132
Lethbridge	1,342	3,157
Macleod	314	780
Medicine Hat	1,915	3,107
Nanton	497	567
Okotoks	495	750
Peace River	1,087	2,309
Pembina	747	879
Pincher Creek	250	763
Redcliff	498	987
Rocky Mountain	641	2,578
St. Albert	163	1,772
Stony Plain	428	996
St. Paul	208	1,283
Sturgeon	890	1,902
Vegreville	1,215	1,894
Vermillion	1,055	1,562
Victoria	638	1,407
Wainwright	935	1,194
Warner	293	565
Whitford	170	1,658

Source:

Statistics of 1923 Alberta Referendum, Premier's Papers, Provincial Archives, Edmonton.

Table 7

Census Population and Intercensal Estimates of the Population of Alberta for All Ages, 15 Years and Older and 20 Years and Older

	Population of All Ages (in thousands)	Population of 15 Years and Older (in thousands)	Population of 20 Years and Older (in thousands)
1910	336	225	197
1911	374	253	222
1912	400	269	236
1913	429	287	251
1914	459	305	267
1915	480	317	277
1916	496	326	285
1917	508	332	290
1918	522	339	296
1919	541	249	304
1920	565	363	315
1921	589	375	326
1922	592	377	327
1923	593	379	328
1924	597	382	329
1925	602	387	332
1926	608	392	335
1927	633	411	351
1928	658	432	368
1929	684	454	386
1930	708	474	403
1931	732	493	419
1932	740	500	425
1933	750	510	435

Source:

Robert E. Popham, Wolfgang Schmidt, Statistics of Alcohol Use and Alcoholism in Canada 1871-1956, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 149.